

PUC Consumer Education Program
Comprehensive Plan



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I. Executive Summary

Background

In 1997 the Maine Legislature enacted P.L. 1997, Chapter 316, "An Act to Restructure the State's Electric Industry." As a result, beginning in March 2000, Maine citizens will have the power to choose their electricity supplier. The Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has been directed by the Legislature (35-A M.R.S.A section 3213) to develop a statewide public education program to provide Maine people with the information they need to make informed choices.

In August 1998, an Initial Workplan was developed which provided the framework for the education program. Subsequently, a Detailed Research Plan outlined the qualitative and quantitative research that would guide development of program components. In September 1998, the Itemized Billing Plan was approved to launch communication of the new "choice-ready" itemized billing format and the basic concepts of a restructured electric industry. The Comprehensive Plan for the Consumer Education Program (CEP), herein, provides the detailed plan of action for the period from January 1999 through Choice Month, March 2000.

Overview

Given the potential complexity of the issues, the state's wide-ranging consumer base and the low levels of consumers understanding revealed by initial research, an extensive communications effort is vital in order for the PUC to accomplish the goals of the education campaign. It demands a lively, creative approach, founded on solid research of the issues, constituencies and the concerns inherent in a transition of this magnitude.

Goals

This Consumer Education Program has three goals approved by the PUC and endorsed by the Maine Legislature:

- Increase consumer awareness of electric industry restructuring, electric choice and related issues
- Facilitate informed consumer decision-making
- Provide an objective and credible source of information for consumers

Target Audiences

This plan has several major target audiences:

Residential consumers including "hard-to-reach" consumers such as low income, elderly, functionally illiterate, consumers who use English as a second language, visually and hearing-impaired consumers and those who are geographically isolated

Small commercial consumers including small, non-residential users such as non-profits, churches and other "non-business" users paying for service at commercial rates

Municipalities

Program Consultation, Advice and Public Input

The PUC has selected a communications contractor, NL Partners of Portland, Maine, to plan, execute and evaluate this Consumer Education Program. In addition, the PUC has formed a Consumer Education Advisory Panel representing a wide range of skills and constituencies to provide initial and ongoing input for the education effort.

Public input for the Consumer Education Program is critical to its success. The PUC will receive ongoing input from the public through the Consumer Education Advisory Panel and through Regional Roundtables that will serve as feedback panels on campaign implementation and evaluation. The PUC has already received public input in the design of the Initial Workplan and this Comprehensive Plan. The PUC continues to welcome public input at all stages of the program, including implementation and evaluation.

Program Refinements

The activities in the plan reflect the findings of the research, particularly regarding how consumers prefer to receive information about electric choice. With the benefit of this research, other states' experience, ongoing feedback from the Advisory Panel and learning gained from Phase II of the CEP program, some strategic changes have been made from the Initial Workplan. As a result of this input, the following substantive changes from the Initial Workplan are reflected in the final plan:

Addition of a residential direct mail primer

Addition of a small business primer and other collateral materials

Creation of a Community Outreach Assistance Fund in place of a grant program

Increase in funding for Regional Outreach Coordinators

Enhancement of the advertising budget, including provision for two "materials" focus groups to test advertising and creative materials

Modification to the interim survey schedule

II. Program Outline - The Comprehensive Plan

The Consumer Education Program is organized into four phases as noted below. Descriptions of program components are provided for each phase. Some components, such as research, community outreach and media relations, overlap program phases.

Phase I: Planning/Research

Planning - The PUC and NL Partners with input from the Advisory Panel developed an Initial Workplan, received public input and obtained final approval of that plan by the PUC Commissioners. The final Comprehensive Plan, herein, details the specific action plans for the remainder of the Consumer Education Program.

Research; Establishment of Benchmarks - The Comprehensive Plan uses consumer research to set clear and measurable benchmarks and to provide input for the development of communication and outreach activities. The research methods include Focus Groups, Pre-Campaign/Post-Campaign Statistical Surveys, and the development of "static feedback panels" herein referred to as Regional Roundtables. In designing the research, close attention has been paid to geographic regions and demographic determinants to ensure those residential, municipal and small commercial consumers throughout the state are reached. Special effort is being taken to ensure that "hard-to-reach" consumers such as low income, functionally illiterate, consumers who use English as a second language, the elderly, visually and hearing-impaired consumers and those that are geographically isolated are reached as well.

Phase II: Implementation of Itemized Billing

The Consumer Education Program used the introduction of itemized billing in January 1999 as a springboard to launch a discussion of electric choice.

Phase II Public Education Effort

The Phase II plan uses an integrated array of public awareness tools to introduce the concepts of electric choice and itemized billing, including:

- Press kits and news releases
- Educational video
- Itemized billing brochure
- Consumer information web site
- Toll-free consumer information phone number

Community Leader Communications

A variety of activities were scheduled to educate community leaders, including regional information meetings, distribution of an electric choice information "packet" and distribution of brochures and videos to members of the Legislature and other community leaders.

Phase III: Implementation of Electric Choice

The Comprehensive Plan focuses primarily on the implementation of educational strategies leading up to the introduction of electric choice in March 2000 and strategies to be implemented after March 2000. An integrated and comprehensive education campaign is planned to provide consumers with the facts they need to understand the changes that are taking place and make an informed choice.

Techniques include:

Ongoing Research and Evaluation - including periodic quantitative surveys and qualitative feedback mechanisms to assess the performance of the campaign and allow for strategic adjustments as necessary

Community Outreach - an intense and far-reaching outreach effort, including training of community outreach participants through "train the trainer" programs, Regional Roundtables, a speakers bureau, conducting workplace communications, local media relations support, Community Outreach Assistance Fund (COAF) to assist selected Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in communicating with "hard- to-reach" constituencies, and support for Regional Outreach Coordinators

Media Relations -- including a press event to mark the beginning of electric choice, press releases, Q&A sessions with PUC Commissioners, and statewide Community Leader Outreach Meetings in January 2000

Collateral Materials - a variety of informational materials to support all facets of the consumer education program

Direct Mail -- including a mailing to residential users, small businesses, and targeted groups through community outreach

Advertising - a multi-media campaign including television, radio and print

Information Support - coordinating with the PUC to support their toll-free call center and information clearinghouse, whether they decide to staff this in-house or to outsource it

Flexibility to Implement Changes -- the plan includes an evaluation system to utilize ongoing feedback from the public through regular Advisory Panel and Regional Roundtable input. The plan also provides the flexibility to allow for refinements to the campaign based on input from the periodic quantitative assessments and from ongoing analysis of paid and unpaid media

Pace of Implementation

In late 1999, NL Partners with input from the PUC will review the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the pace of implementation of the consumer education program (CEP) is commensurate with the pace of development of the competitive marketplace. If necessary, the PUC may decide to adjust the speed

of implementation of some components of the campaign to ensure maximum consumer benefit for the available resources.

Phase IV: Post-Campaign Evaluation and Ongoing Support

In addition to an ongoing review of the benchmarks and qualitative and quantitative research throughout the program, there will be consumer surveys in April 2000 and October 2000 after much educational activity has taken place. We have indicated throughout the plan the prospective activities, November 2000 through January 2001 that might utilize campaign extension funds.

III. Situation Analysis

The Comprehensive Plan focuses on Phase III, including outreach strategies for the period leading up to the introduction of Electric Choice in March 2000 and continuing on through the rest of the year. The following situation analysis provides background information about the actions taken and knowledge gained during Phases I & II.

Phase I - Initial Workplan and Research

The PUC and NL Partners, in conjunction with the Advisory Panel, developed the Initial Workplan for the education campaign during June and July of 1998. In August 1998, the PUC formally approved the plan. The three-phase plan was designed to:

- Increase consumer awareness of electric restructuring, electric choice and related issues
- Facilitate informed consumer decision-making
- Provide an objective and credible source of information for consumers

Costs:

Program Planning—\$10,000

Includes research, development, review and editing of Initial Workplan.

The first phase of the plan included implementation of qualitative and quantitative research. When combined, the qualitative research obtained through focus groups and the quantitative research obtained through phone surveys provided a baseline understanding of consumer awareness and needs relative to electric industry restructuring.

The qualitative research was used to identify key issues and initial consumer understanding about electric restructuring in order to provide:

- Greater insight into consumer perceptions about electric industry restructuring issues
- Framework for developing the quantitative research

The quantitative research was conducted separately for residential, commercial and municipal consumers. The knowledge gained from the research provided the foundation for developing the Itemized Billing Plan and materials (Phase II) as well as the Comprehensive Plan (Phase III). The research was used to determine initial levels of awareness about restructuring and define measurable benchmarks that will be the basis for assessing the project's ongoing results among residential consumers.

The following sections detail research findings, the events and initial materials designed for itemized billing.

Research Findings

Focus Groups - Residential focus groups were held in six areas of the state (Ellsworth, Farmington, Portland, Presque Isle, Rockland, and Sanford) during the period of August 18 - September 1, 1998. A commercial focus group was held in Lewiston on September 24, 1998. The following outlines the key goals of the focus group research, initial findings and the primary differences between residential and commercial customers:

1. Evaluate consumer reaction to electric competition and identify any areas where there is confusion or concern regarding either itemized billing or electric choice.

There was a great deal of consistency among all the focus groups. There was a low level of awareness about electric industry restructuring. The greatest concerns expressed by the participants pertained to reliability of service and price/cost.

2. Identify the most effective vehicles for conveying information to discrete residential constituencies within the state. Those vehicles identified in the focus groups will help develop a list of vehicles for further verification in the quantitative research.

The key vehicles identified for conveying information were direct mail, newspaper articles, a toll-free number, and radio and TV spots.

Respondents were quite negative about the concept of a spokesperson. They felt there was generally a strong potential for bias with this format. The single exception was the PUC, which registered a high degree of credibility.

3. Assess any differences that may exist in various regions of the state that would impact either the message or the method of delivery used to inform residential users of electricity about restructuring. Concern and awareness regarding issues were relatively consistent across all groups. There was a concern among the Ellsworth, Farmington and Presque Isle groups as to whether any companies would want to enter more rural markets. In the Presque Isle group, there was concern that northern Maine would not receive appropriate attention during the process of electric industry restructuring.

4. Identify the primary differences between residential and commercial participants.

The commercial participants had lower levels of customer satisfaction with their current electric utilities than residential participants, and there was concern regarding rate structures. Commercial participants also stated that they would be willing to attend regional meetings (of trade organizations)

to learn more about electric industry restructuring. Both commercial and residential participants had a low level of awareness of electric choice, with only a few considering themselves well informed.

Residential, Commercial and Municipal Quantitative Phone Surveys - Phone surveys were conducted among 600 residential consumers, 300 small commercial consumers and 105 municipal consumers. The surveys were implemented to expand upon the initial findings of the focus groups and to provide a statistically valid gauge to measure education campaign results. We wished to determine levels of “self-reported knowledge” (the extent to which consumers felt they had correct information about electric industry restructuring) compared to “real knowledge” (the extent to which consumers had correct answers). Specifically, we sought to satisfy the following objectives:

- Establish a baseline of awareness regarding electric industry restructuring
- Establish a baseline of real and self-reported knowledge
- Assess which educational methods would be most effective in reaching consumers
- Identify specific areas of confusion or concern
- Determine the demand for additional information/resources
- Assess the level of satisfaction regarding current information/resources
- Determine specific issues which should be addressed in the Consumer Education Program
- Establish a baseline from which to analyze the significance of changes in knowledge, attitudes and perception over the life of the campaign
- Identify any perceived obstacles or disincentives that may exist that would impact how electric industry restructuring is viewed

The following details the key findings from the three surveys:

Awareness	<p>47% of residential customers are aware that changes will occur in the way electricity is bought.</p> <p>93% of commercial customers are aware that changes will occur in the way electricity is bought.</p> <p>78% of municipal customers are aware that changes will occur in the way electricity is bought.</p>
Self-Reported	<p>16% of residential customers consider themselves to be Knowledge well informed about the upcoming changes.</p> <p>40% of commercial customers consider themselves to be well informed about the upcoming changes.</p> <p>71% of municipal customers consider themselves to be well informed about the upcoming changes.</p>
Real Knowledge(based on answers to true/false questions about restructuring, the following statements can be made)	<p>Among residential customers, knowledge about restructuring is very weak.</p> <p>Among commercial customers, knowledge about restructuring is very weak.</p> <p>Among municipal customers, there is a fair level of inaccuracy or misinformation.</p>
Savings	<p>43% of residential customers expect a small reduction in their bill.</p> <p>33% of commercial customers expect a small reduction in their bill.</p> <p>27% of municipal customers expect a small reduction in their bill.</p>
Renewable Power	<p>38% of residential customers are willing to pay slightly more for renewable power.</p> <p>21% of commercial customers are willing to pay slightly more for renewable power.</p> <p>12% of municipal customers are willing to pay slightly more for renewable power.</p>
Methods Of Receiving Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preferred Residential customers feel television news and direct mail would be the most effective ways to learn about restructuring.• Commercial customers feel public information meetings, direct mail and a toll-free number would be the most effective ways to learn about restructuring.• Municipal customers feel public information meetings, television news and newspaper articles would be the most effective ways to learn about restructuring.
Key Concerns	<p>The top four concerns for residential and municipal customers are reliability, rapid restoration after an outage, power quality and price fluctuations.</p> <p>The top four concerns for commercial customers are reliability, rapid restoration after an outage, price fluctuations and power quality.</p>
Confusion	<p>For each group, the most confusing element of restructuring is the belief that, if no action is taken by the customer, nothing will change. Consumers must be shown that, with electric choice, taking “no action” will result in accepting the Standard Offer Service.</p>

It is apparent from the research that the Consumer Education Program needs to address the following key issues:

- The low level of residential awareness
- The low level of “self-reported” knowledge among all three target audiences
- The low level of “real knowledge,” and in some cases the high level of misinformation, among all three target audiences
- The high level of concern regarding the perceived effect of restructuring on reliability of service
- The low comfort level of target audiences in their ability to make informed choices
- The Comprehensive Plan details the multiple means that will be used to address these key issues with vehicles that reflect the information needs of residential, commercial and municipal consumers.

Cost:

Initial Research/Development of Benchmarks—\$52,000

Includes six residential focus groups, one commercial focus group, phone survey of 600 residential, 300 commercial, and 105 municipal consumers during initial research phase, development and editing of reports, conducting focus groups and phone surveys and NL coordination.

Phase II - Itemized Billing

The introduction of itemized billing in January 1999 was a natural springboard to acquaint Maine consumers with electric industry restructuring and electric choice. We learned from the research that consumers are curious about electric restructuring and would like to learn about it as soon as possible. We also learned that consumers are looking to the PUC as the source for unbiased information about electric industry restructuring.

Plan Objectives

The overall goal of the Itemized Billing Phase of the Consumer Education Program was to utilize the new billing format to raise awareness of the concepts of electric industry restructuring and electric choice among consumers.

Message

The Consumer Education Program message for the Itemized Billing Phase of the plan was twofold:

- Describe the upcoming changes to consumer electric bills
- Place itemized billing in context (choice is coming)

Materials

The following details the specific programs and materials that were used during the Itemized Billing Phase.

Identity/Logo --A “choice” logo was designed and produced to create a cohesive identity that projects a consumer friendly tone and easily recognizable symbol for the Consumer Education Program. It is being used on all outputs and communication, so eventually, consumers will identify all information bearing the logo as part of the education effort.

Brochure - A brochure was produced that detailed the introduction of itemized billing and how electric industry restructuring would affect consumers.

Educational Video - An video was produced to provide consumers with an overview of the changes in the electric industry and explain the details of itemized billing. The video was designed for multiple uses, as an overview for media sessions, presentation support, leave behinds and air time on local access cable stations and background information for legislators and other community leaders.

Toll-Free Phone Number - A toll-free number was obtained (1-877-PUC-FACT) as an easy method for consumers to obtain information about electric choice. The number is to be staffed and coordinated by the PUC. If call volume becomes too heavy to handle in-house, the line will be moved to an outside call center.

Web Site - A web site was developed with an address similar to the campaign’s toll-free number (**HYPERLINK** <http://www.pucfact.com>) www.pucfact.com). The goal of the web site is to provide a central and easy-to-access location for consumer questions about the upcoming changes in electric industry restructuring and electric choice. The web site contains a link to the PUC for consumers to obtain additional information and materials about electric industry restructuring.

Press Kit --An introductory press kit was developed to provide the members of the media with comprehensive information. The kit included a cover letter, fact sheet, glossary of terms, brochure, frequently asked questions, sample itemized bills and a graphic representation of electric industry restructuring.

Press Conference - On Monday, December 21, 1998, a press conference was held. It was well attended by the members of the broadcast media and moderately well attended by members of the print media. Governor Angus King made an initial welcome and PUC Chairman Tom Welch addressed the group. Following a question and answer period, there was an informal roundtable with the PUC Commissioners.

Media Relations Plan --The focus groups definitively stated the belief that the PUC is the only unbiased expert involved in electric industry restructuring. Based on these findings it was decided to put the PUC Commissioners in front of the media as early and as often as possible, so that as Choice Month approaches, consumers will look to the PUC for answers. Positive media relationships have

been reinforced and will continue to be nurtured with the release of reliable, factual information and timely responses to misinformation printed or broadcast by the media. This process was begun during the Itemized Billing Phase with the press conference and the Community Outreach Meetings and will continue during Phases III and IV.

Community Outreach Plan- -To better reach consumers during this phase, we sought assistance from and provided education materials to legislators and other community leaders in a series of four outreach breakfasts (Portland, Augusta, Bangor and Houlton) held in late January 1999. During the meetings a PUC Commissioner gave a presentation on itemized billing and electric industry restructuring, the video was shown and each attendee was given an information packet. Each packet included a request form that attendees could use to sign up to be a member of the Regional Roundtable, request more information or materials, request a speaker for their organization or offer their organization’s newsletter for information dissemination.

Utility Partner Meetings --During itemized billing the CEP team initiated the first of a series of meetings with the electric utilities in Maine. The goal of this partnership is to coordinate the efforts of the Consumer Education Program with the education efforts of the utilities in order to minimize consumer confusion and to promote consistency of language and terms.

Concurrent Education Efforts --During the Itemized Billing Phase the CEP team began to network with various other groups (small business groups, local and state chambers, SMAAA, and various CBOs) to educate their constituencies about electric industry restructuring and electric choice. The CEP team has initiated a working relationship with these groups and will continue to work closely with them as electric industry restructuring progresses in order to align messages, coordinate timing, and assure maximum exposure for the effort.

Costs:

Video	\$50,000
Includes writing and editing of script, filming, editing, production, printing and duplication of 2,500 videos and NL coordination.	
Brochure	\$ 7,000
Includes design, layout, copywriting, production, printing 20,000 brochures and NL coordination.	
Media Relations/PR Kits	\$12,000
Includes cost of folders, label design and printing, design and printing of business card, design, copywriting and duplication of information sheets, stuffing envelopes, coordination of PR event including follow-up and NL coordination.	
Web Site	\$10,000
Includes initial design, copywriting, editing, follow-up, Internet scripting, testing and revising web site, name search and NL coordination.	
Logo/Identity	\$ 5,500
Includes design, layout and trademarking of identity and NL coordination.	
Community/Opinion Leader Outreach	\$10,000
Initial research of groups to be included in database, data processing, list review, meetings with CBO sub-committee, preparation of grant process application, coding of groups, NL management and coordination of process.	
Video Distribution	\$ 5,000
Includes identifying groups to receive videos, development and editing of letter to groups, mailing and follow-up costs.	
Community Breakfasts	\$21,000
Includes design, printing and mailing of invitation, follow-up phone calls to invitees who did not RSVP, design, copywriting, printing and assembly of information packets, refinements and identification of groups in database, audio-visual equipment rental and setup in four locations, design and production of four foam-core presentation boards, four room rental fees and food in each location, and NL coordination.	
Community Breakfast Follow-Up	\$10,700
Includes further delineation and identification of groups in database to receive materials, copywriting and editing of letter, mail house costs including database refinements, printing, insertion and mailing, and NL coordination.	

IV. Research Plan/Development of Benchmarks

Research is the foundation upon which the Comprehensive Plan has been built. All activities are designed to meet consumers’ needs identified by quantitative analysis of the data. Future research is planned to provide input for refinements of the plan. The effort will track the amount of “real learning” which occurs throughout the education campaign, as compared to “self-reported knowledge.”

Background

As outlined in the situation analysis, during Phase I of the Consumer Education Program (fall 1998), qualitative (focus groups) and quantitative (phone surveys of residential, commercial and municipal consumers) research was conducted for three primary reasons:
Aid in the development of materials for the Itemized Billing Phase
Establish initial levels of awareness and consumer understanding/ knowledge
Provide the data for establishing measurable benchmarks

During Phase III of the Consumer Education Program, the PUC will conduct interim quantitative phone studies in October 1999 and in April 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the Consumer Education Program. These studies will examine and track changes of consumer awareness and learning relating to electric industry restructuring. They will provide guidance in assessing campaign progress and provide opportunities to fine-tune the messages and delivery methods. These studies will also provide insight for tailoring materials to specific subgroups, such as hearing and visually impaired, functionally illiterate and those consumers for which English is not their primary language.

In September 2000 (post-Phase III), a final wave of quantitative research (phone surveys) will be conducted to assess the campaign’s performance and determine if additional efforts are needed to help educate Maine consumers about electric industry restructuring.

Benchmarks

Benchmarks have been developed to help assess the performance of the entire Consumer Education Program. The goals of the education campaign as outlined in the Initial Workplan are:

- Increase consumer awareness of electric industry restructuring, electric choice and related issues
- Facilitate informed consumer decision-making
- Provide an objective and credible source of information for consumers

Because the first two goals involve varying levels of consumer awareness and real knowledge, and the third appears to be confirmed by the initial research findings (credible source = PUC), the CEP team agreed to measure only the first two goals.

The following details the questions (and initial results) from the residential survey that have been used to establish the campaign benchmarks. These benchmarks will be used to assess how well the campaign achieves the first two program goals.

To Measure Self-Reported Knowledge (Benchmark levels are shown in bold)

As far as you know, is the way you buy electricity in the future going to change?

	Benchmark
Yes	47.0%
No	40.0
Don’t Know	13.0

In the near future there will be changes in the way you buy electricity. How well informed are you about the upcoming changes in the way electricity will be delivered to your home?

	Benchmark
Very well informed	3.0%
Fairly well informed	12.6
Not very well informed	48.1
Not at all informed	35.7
Don’t know/refused/no answer	0.6

To Measure Real Knowledge/Informed Decision-Making

I would like to read you a list of statements about electric industry restructuring. They may be either true or false. Based on what you know or expect concerning this subject, please tell me whether each statement is true or false. Or, you may say that you are “unsure” or truly “don’t know.”

The Benchmark is based on the combined percentage of correct answers.

Benchmark

1. If a customer does not switch to one of the new electric generation companies, that customer will continue to deal only with their local utility.**18%**

- Under the new structure, the new competitive electric generating companies will be responsible for repairs of poles and power lines following an outage. **33%**
- If a customer does not switch to one of the new electric generating companies, a provider will be chosen for you.....**43%**
- Under the new structure, the price of electricity is guaranteed to be lower than the price you pay today.**52%**
- In order to switch to one of the new competitive electric generating companies, customers must first notify their current local utility company.....**56%**
- Under the new structure, the cost to transmit and deliver electricity to your home or business will continue to be regulated by the Public Utilities Commission. **64%**
- Once a provider has been chosen for a customer, that customer is NOT able to switch to one of the new competitive electric generating companies.....**76%**

Under the new plan, if your electricity went out, whom would you call? Would you callÖ

	Benchmark
Your new electricity supplier (the company that generates the power)	12.9%
Your current electric utility (the company that distributes the power)	74.1
Unsure whom to call	13.0
Don't know/refused/no answer	

When do you believe the new system will be implemented?

	Benchmark
Before the end of 1998	1.3%
First half of 1999	5.6
Second half of 1999	20.3
First half of 2000	28.6
Second half of 2000	6.5
Later than 2000	15.3
Don't know/refused/no answer	22.4

To Provide Insight to Key Campaign Issues

The following question will be used to gauge consumer concerns and the relative importance they place upon these issues. However, because it only measures levels of concern, it cannot be used to assess campaign effectiveness

Thinking about how things will be under the new plan, I am going to read a list of specific issues about which you may or may not be concerned. I would like you to tell me how much you are concerned about each one. Please use a 7 point scale for your rating, in which “7” means that this issue is of great concern, “1” means it is not of any concern at all, and “4” means a moderate amount of concern.

	Average #
Reliability of electric service	6.4
Quick restoration of electricity after outages	6.3
Electric quality (power surges/voltage fluctuations)	6.0
Insufficient information from electric generation companies to allow you to make an intelligent choice	5.9
Price fluctuations up or down	5.9
Environmentally friendly electric supply	5.7
Confusing advertising from new electric generation companies	5.2

The next question will be used to gauge consumer willingness to explore competitive electricity supplier options. It will give the education team an understanding of consumer openness to the concept of electric choice. However, because it measures levels of willingness, it cannot be used to assess campaign effectiveness.

Assuming there will be a number of differences, including price and other features, among the various electricity suppliers, how likely would you be to explore the various alternatives? Would you beÖ

Very likely	56.1%
Somewhat likely	31.5
Not very likely	7.2
Not at all likely	2.8
Don't know/refused/no answer	2.4

Phone Surveys

During Phase III we will continue to monitor benchmarks. Two interim phone studies will be conducted during this phase to assess the effectiveness of campaign messaging. These surveys will be conducted at the following times:

October 1999—Post-Itemized Billing Phase/Pre-Choice
April 2000—Post-Choice

These studies will examine and track changes to key consumer awareness and beliefs relating to electric industry restructuring issues. They will provide guidance in assessing campaign progress and provide opportunities to fine-tune the messages and delivery methods. They will also provide valuable guidance for education or communication efforts that may need to be tailored differently for specific subgroups.

Evaluation/Reporting - Within a month of the completion of each survey the CEP team will issue a report outlining the levels of consumer awareness, understanding and perceptions about electric industry restructuring and an overall assessment of campaign progress. These reports will also be used to help fine-tune the Consumer Education Program's themes and materials. They will indicate progress toward the measurement objectives as stated in this plan.

The follow-up quantitative research will only measure the residential segment for two reasons: 1) it is reasonable to conclude that more well- informed residential consumers are an indicator that small commercial consumers are also better informed and 2) limited program funding does not permit quantitative research for all segments.

Pretesting Advertising Materials

The goal of the advertising materials research is to determine (prior to beginning production) whether the materials communicate the desired messaging.

In the Initial Workplan, the recommended strategy for obtaining consumer feedback to advertising materials was to review the materials with the three Regional Roundtables during June. However, in this plan the start date of the Regional Roundtables has been moved back to utilize limited budget resources at a more critical point of the campaign.

In order to obtain the needed consumer feedback, the CEP team will hold two focus groups in July 1999. Items to be pretested include:

- Residential direct mail piece
- Advertising (TV, radio, print) concepts
- Brochure outline

Cost:

Pretesting Advertising Materials	\$9,000
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Includes conducting two focus groups (Portland and Bangor), development and editing of survey questionnaire, final report and NL coordination.

Post-Campaign Research

Post-campaign assessment provides a quantitative analysis of benchmarks at the end of the campaign.

This effort will consist of the following:

Post-campaign residential phone study (September 2000)

Review of qualitative feedback from Regional Roundtables

Review of interim assessments (October 1999, April 2000)

Evaluation/Reporting --At the conclusion of the post-campaign research, a report will be issued detailing consumer awareness, understanding and perception levels, and outlining suggestions for continued campaign efforts and any requirements for additional funding. Progress toward measurement objectives will also be discussed.

Additional Feedback

Regional Roundtable Feedback -- The PUC will develop three to four Regional Roundtables to serve as feedback panels to give the Maine Public Utilities Commission periodic input during the consumer education campaign.

These roundtables will contain a core group of 10 - 20 individuals in each of three regions and will represent a variety of interests. It is expected that the roundtables will meet three to five times for about two hours each between fall 1999 and summer 2000.

All roundtable meetings are open to the public and will be promoted as forums to air views, get information and provide feedback on the PUC's education program. Roundtable input will also be helpful in determining if there is confusion among consumers regarding marketing materials from competitive electricity suppliers.

A discussion guide will be developed to collect feedback and pertinent comments at each Regional Roundtable meeting. A written report summarizing the participants' feedback will then be issued for each meeting, with time sensitive results reported back to the education team immediately.

Roundtables are tentatively scheduled to be conducted at the following times:

- October 1999
- January 2000
- April 2000
- June 2000

Measurement Objectives

In order to achieve the goals for this campaign, a series of measurable objectives have been developed and are detailed below. Movement toward these objectives will be measured only among the residential consumer audience and will be verified through the quantitative phone studies. There are obviously many factors that will affect awareness and learning throughout this program. They include:

- Efforts of the PUC campaign
- Supplier marketing efforts
- Utility partnership efforts
- Unsolicited media coverage
- Community activities in addition to PUC outreach

Because some levels of awareness are so low, we have indicated what may realistically be achieved, but also a “stretch” objective that we would hope to achieve with combined impact of all messages in the marketplace.

The measurement objectives for residential consumers are as follows:

Increase Awareness of Electric Choice

Increase self-reported knowledge of electric choice (the belief that the way electricity is bought will change in the future) from:

Current Correct: 47% Objective: 60% Stretch: 80%

Increase Numbers of Informed Consumers (those consumers with high self-reported knowledge)

Increase those consumers who consider themselves to be “fairly well/very well informed” about electric choice from:

Current Correct: 15.6% Objective: 60% Stretch: 70%

Increase Real Knowledge

Achieve significant improvement in real knowledge about restructuring as represented by the true/false questions asked in the initial research. Specifically we wish to increase the percentage of correct answers with regard to each area of knowledge:

- 1) Consumers who do not pick a competitive supplier will continue to deal with only one utility

Current Correct: 18% Objective: 60% Stretch: 70%

- 2) Distribution utility will still repair wires and poles

Current Correct: 33% Objective: 60% Stretch: 70%

- 3) No action will result in Standard Offer

Current Correct: 43% Objective: 60% Stretch: 70%

- 4) There is no guarantee of lower prices

Current Correct: 52% Objective: 70% Stretch: 80%

- 5) In order to switch to a competitive supplier, customer does not need to first notify current local distribution company

Current Correct: 56% Objective: 70% Stretch: 80%

- 6) Delivery cost will still be regulated by the PUC

Current Correct: 64% Objective: 80% Stretch: 90%

- 7) Even if the Standard Offer is taken, you can switch any time

Current Correct: 76% Objective: 90% Stretch: 95%

Cluster Response

As a further measure of real learning we will identify the percentage of respondents who answer the majority of true/false questions correctly and use this group to measure increases in knowledge.

Current Correct: 30% Objective: 50% Stretch: 65%

It is important to point out that as a measure of “real learning” increases in these percentages may appear to be modest when, in fact, they are dramatic. For example, in the case of the percentage with a majority of correct answers. A twenty percentage point increase from the “current correct” (30%) to the “objective” (50%) will mean that the number of people able to give a majority of correct answers will have increased by 66%.

Costs:

Interim and Final Research/Development of Benchmarks—\$42,000

Includes fall 1998, interim phone surveys (October 1999 and April 2000) of 600 residential consumers, final phone survey (September 2000) of 600 residential consumers, development and editing of reports and NL coordination.

V. Comprehensive Plan

Strategic Overview

The process of electric industry restructuring is complex and confusing with far reaching implications for Maine consumers. The research indicates that there is little “real knowledge” of the issues and that consumers have low comfort levels of informed decision-making. There is considerable interest among consumers in learning more about electric industry restructuring and the process of making a choice. Consumers have also indicated a variety of preferred methods of receiving information.

These factors clearly point to the need for an integrated and comprehensive education program to provide consumers with the information they need to make informed choices. Throughout the messaging, there is a need to manage consumers’ expectations. It will be most prudent to suggest to them that the “benefits” of electric industry restructuring and competition, especially for residential consumers, will evolve over time with maturation of the market, rather than be instantaneous.

Implementation of Electric Choice--Timetable

This phase of the plan focuses primarily on the implementation of educational strategies leading up to the introduction of electric choice in March 2000 and continuing for six to nine months after that.

Key dates for consideration are as follows:

January 1999-September 1999

Assessing consumer reaction to itemized billing format
Gaining momentum of aggregator marketing

September 1999

Possible beginning of supplier messages in the marketplace leading up to Standard Offer rates

October 1999

Submission of Standard Offer bids

December 1999

Announcement of Standard Offer rates
Determination of key players in the competitive market

January 2000-February 2000

Likely pre-choice solicitations and consumer activity leading up to “Choice Month”

March 2000

Choice Month
Heightened levels of competitive marketing

April 2000

Survey information on level of learning/perceptions in the marketplace
Real market information regarding level of participation in choice

September 2000- January 2001

Survey information on level of learning in the marketplace
Possible contingency educational activities based on needs of consumers

Tactical Overview

The awareness plan relies on multiple and complementary educational tools, based on solid consumer input regarding preferred methods of receiving information. The premise is to move consumers through a progressive learning process as follows:

Awareness— create higher levels of awareness of electric choice concepts

Understanding— develop deeper levels of real knowledge needed to make decisions

Comfort level — provide support, especially to hard-to-reach consumers, with unbiased information to enable consumers to make informed decisions

Informed decision-making— develop an enhanced feeling of confidence among consumers for making an informed choice

The tactics indicated in the Comprehensive Plan all bring unique strengths to achieving progressive learning:

Ongoing Research and Evaluation— provides a periodic touchstone of where consumers are in this continuum of learning

Community Outreach - provides hands-on support, especially for hard-to-reach groups to enhance comfort levels in informed decision-making

Media Relations - provides a high level of information to all target audiences

Collateral Materials - provides a wide variety of information “when and where” consumers need them to support all facets of the consumer education program

Direct Mail- provides a comprehensive electric choice reference piece to all residential users in the state, as well as targeted information to small businesses, and other groups through the community outreach efforts

Advertising - provides a controlled messaging format to reach large numbers of consumers through a multi-media campaign including television, radio and print

Information Support - provides a toll-free information number and information clearing house through the PUC to answer questions and provide materials to enhance consumer learning

Flexibility to Implement Changes - provides an evaluation system to utilize the ongoing feedback from the public, through regular Advisory Panel and Regional Roundtable input. The plan also provides flexibility to allow for refinements to the campaign based on input from the periodic quantitative assessments and from our ongoing analysis of paid and unpaid media exposures.

Messaging

Messaging will be a critically important component for the consumer education program as materials are developed and outreach is started. The following approaches will be taken when developing the messaging of the campaign:

- The PUC will be a “neutral” party throughout the program. Taking this approach further ensures the PUC will continue to be a credible resource.
- The PUC will not indicate a preference for one energy source or supplier over another
- The PUC will inform consumers how to choose while educating consumers about their right to choose “not to choose”
- The CEP team will write materials to the eighth-grade level ensuring they are comprehended by the greatest majority of people

Costs:

Comprehensive Plan—\$50,000

Includes research, development, review and editing of Comprehensive Plan.

VI. Community Outreach Program

Strategic Overview

The community outreach effort is designed to provide a “grassroots” component for the Consumer Education Program to help consumer’s progress to informed decision-making. Working primarily through Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), to reach the “hard-to-reach” subgroups of our target audience, the outreach effort will provide hands-on support as well as differentiation of the message for their constituencies.

Outreach activities will dovetail closely in timing and content with other campaign efforts, including direct mail, media relations, paid media, collateral, call center and other informational resource efforts. This integration will assure optimal alignment of messages, timeliness and cost-effective use of resources.

December 1998- March 1999: Introduction to Electric Industry Restructuring/Itemized Billing

April 1999- December 1999: Get Plugged InóWhat You Need to Know About Electric Choice

January 2000- February 28, 2000: Choice is ComingóHere’s Help!

March 2000-January 2001: Choice is HereóWhat You Need to Know!

Following “choice month” (March 2000), there will be communication efforts surrounding the experience of electric choice; how consumers are feeling, who’s switching and performance of the education program. Upon evaluation of consumer surveys in September 2000, other education efforts may be implemented.

Community-Based Organization Outreach

We will use Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) as a primary distribution channel to reach a variety of target audiences. There are CBOs that provide special assistance to “hard-to-reach” individuals such as low-income consumers, elderly consumers, visually and hearing-impaired consumers, functionally illiterate consumers and those who use English as a second language. In addition, there are organizations that reach small business groups, trade and professional organizations and municipalities. CBOs will serve a combination of needs for the consumer education program, acting as highly credible third-party information sources and providing a channel of communication from the PUC to their members.

The rationale for a CBO outreach program is as follows:

- Target hard-to-reach consumers who might not be reached through the media relations strategies and mass media campaigns or who may find the direct mail piece difficult to access
- Differentiate messages for populations with unique and defining qualities
- Provide an opportunity for hard-to-reach consumers to learn from a source they are closer to and may be more comfortable learning from
- Provide an opportunity for interactive education to reinforce key information

Segmentation of CBOs

To prioritize activities and maximize the impact of the consumer education program budget, we have identified three segments of community organizations to receive strategic outreach. It is important to note that these groupings are flexible and may change as further information is gathered on specific organizations, or as this outreach effort is implemented.

CBO Segment 1 -- These groups are defined as multi-regional, or statewide organizations possessing large memberships, with active and natural communication infrastructures, that can be readily tapped. An additional criterion is they have a strong interest in assisting with communication of electric industry restructuring concepts to their constituents. The initial approach with Segment 1 CBOs is to utilize their existing forums, meetings, statewide conferences or professional training workshops, newsletters and publications already in place. The CEP team will aggressively pursue one-on-one contacts, investigate speaking opportunities, investigate opportunities to have an exhibit at statewide conferences, pursue having regular columns in their newsletters, dovetail with their existing outreach plans, invite them to become participants in the Regional Roundtables and create new activities where appropriate.

Some examples of Segment 1 CBOs and their membership include:

- Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- Pine Tree Legal Assistance
- Maine Institute for the Blind
- Community Action Program (CAP) Agencies
- Trade Associations and Statewide Professional Organizations
- Maine Association of Non-Profits
- Baxter School for the Deaf

- Town Managers, Town Clerks and/or Chief Selectpersons
- Legislators
- Maine Chamber and Business Alliance Members
- Maine Association of Chamber Executives

CBO Segment 2 ó These groups are defined as smaller, more local organizations that may or may not have strong communication infrastructures. Some of these groups may have a compelling rationale for communicating the “choice” message, as in the case of environmental organizations. The approach with this segment will be to first identify which organizations can best reach the primary target audiences and help fulfill the goals of the campaign. The CEP team will aggressively seek contact with these groups to develop targeted presentations, provide training to their staff so they may train others, provide information to them so they may disseminate that information to their members and assist as requested with their efforts to educate their constituents. In addition, they will receive the CBO newsletter and invitations to participate in the Regional Roundtables. They may also be asked to assist the CEP team in getting the electric choice message to their local media.

Some examples of Segment 2 include:

- Environmental Groups
- Local Senior Citizen Clubs/Centers
- Ethnic Groups
- PTAs
- Superintendents/Principals
- Adult Education Programs
- Literacy Volunteer Programs
- Tribal Communities
- Councils on Government/Planning Organizations
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Civic Clubs

CBO Segment 3 ó These groups represent the balance of the identified CBOs who may be helpful in outreach but may not have a large statewide membership. They may lack a strong communications infrastructure or have no specific mission for communicating electric choice concepts. However, some of these groups may, as choice gets closer, develop a cohesive communications plan. The approach with this group will be to track them through the database, respond to any requests for information from them and work with them as requested on appropriate outreach activities that will be cost-effective and within the CEP budget.

Some examples of Segment 3 include:

- Local Human Service Groups
- Colleges and Universities
- Daycare Centers
- Recreational Programs such as the YMCA, YWCA, and Town Recreation programs
- Large Corporations/Employee Groups

CBO Database

To identify and provide efficient access to the targeted CBO audiences, an extensive database has been created. This database will serve as the core of the educational delivery to our target audiences. The strategy for the ongoing refinement and use of this database is outlined below:

Current Database -- The current database consists of over 3,000 records representing a wide range of CBOs and community leaders. The current files were culled to designate individuals deemed most likely to assist with, or be a key influence to, the outreach effort.

Refinements to Database - The CEP team plans the following refinements to the CBO database:

- Continue to build and delineate the database in keeping with the three-segment CBO strategy, categorizing all CBOs according to Segments 1, 2, and 3
- Identify Civic Clubs, Principals, Superintendents, Adult Education Programs, Municipal Offices, Environmental Groups, Senior Citizen Groups, Legislators, Non-English Speaking Groups, CAP Agencies, Unions, Tribes, Visually and Hearing Impaired Groups through a coding system so they are easily retrieved for targeted mailings
- Continue to identify new groups within each of the categories
- Assign each CBO to a region and to a Regional Coordinator

Costs:

Community/Opinion Leader Database Management \$12,700

Includes review and delineation of database into segment sub-groups, monthly review, editing and updates, mail house costs, and NL coordination.

Target Audiences

CBOs are an important vehicle in helping the campaign attain one of its end goals—to reach the target audiences. For purposes of effective outreach, the CEP team has identified five target audiences: hard-to-reach or special needs consumers; consumers who may be effectively reached through membership organizations, including large employer newsletters or company forums; small commercial consumers; legislators and municipalities.

“Hard-to-Reach” and “Special Needs” Consumers

These are individuals who may not be reached effectively through mass-media efforts due to their socioeconomic, demographic or physical characteristics. Such target groups may include: low income consumers, senior citizens, hearing or visually impaired consumers, functionally illiterate or those that do not use English as their first language and geographically isolated consumers.

Action Plan --

This important audience will receive focused attention in the following ways:

Initiate proactive meetings with Segment 1 and Segment 2 CBOs that have a mission to serve these groups

Identify specific outreach plans with each of the major CBO vehicles in this audience

Schedule presentations at annual or quarterly meetings of key statewide organizations assisting the “hard-to-reach,” such as adult education directors

Tap specialists in specific areas for the speakers bureau to make presentations

Provide funds to groups that will adapt materials and messages for these individuals through Community Outreach Assistance Funds (COAF)

Work with Regional Outreach Coordinators and Segment 1 and 2 CBOs to develop appropriate outreach techniques

Write all copy to an eighth grade comprehension level

Equip PUC answer center with a TDD relay

Develop articles for inclusion in appropriate newsletters

Large Employer/Organization Staff--

Certain membership organizations and large businesses may play an important role in this campaign through their ability to efficiently reach a large number of consumers through their membership or employee base. Examples of these include credit unions and banks, paper companies, colleges and universities, hospitals, BIW, UNUM, L.L. Bean and Maine State Government. These organizations may be helpful in publishing materials in newsletters, serving on Regional Roundtables or distributing materials at their group meetings.

Action Plan--

Cost-effective outreach can be achieved via large company/organization partnerships. Some of the activities to be used through these channels include:

- Delineate in database individuals who should assist with communications
- Meet with large organization representatives to determine what support is needed
- Develop newsletter opportunities
- Develop large membership/employee presentation opportunities

Small Commercial Consumers Overview--

Most of Maine's businesses are small to medium-sized, often having fewer than 50 employees. In fact, the National Federation of Independent Businesses in Maine has 4,000 members, and the combined individual membership of the Chambers of Commerce is in the thousands. If given the necessary information early and effectively, Maine's small businesses will be better able to make competitive business decisions on their future electricity purchases. This group also includes small non-profit agencies including churches that are paying for electricity at small commercial rates.

Action Plan -- The following activities are targeted specifically to small commercial consumers:

- Initiate proactive meetings with CBO Segment 1 and 2 contacts such as chambers, trade associations and NFIB to determine opportunities to coordinate with existing plans
- Develop and utilize appropriate collateral
- Contact statewide trade organizations to determine appropriate conferences and annual meetings at which the PUC should offer workshops or host and exhibit booth
- Develop speaking engagements in small commercial venues, such as local chamber meetings
- Pursue holding a panel discussion at the annual meetings of key small business groups such as the Maine Association of Chamber Executives and the Maine Chamber and Business Alliance
- Send a newsletter, geared specifically to the particular needs of small business consumers to members of the local chambers of commerce throughout Maine
- Develop newsletter opportunities

Costs:

Small Business—\$20,500

Includes design, layout, copywriting, newsletter insert fees, production, printing, mailing and NL coordination.

Legislator Overview -- Maine Legislators represent an important audience because they will likely be receiving questions from their constituents. Leading up to choice month and directly after choice month, consumers may have many questions about electric choice marketing messages they receive from competitive electricity suppliers. Initial concern and confusion for some consumers may be high. Legislators in turn will be called upon to help clarify these issues and translate the messages. As a result, it is essential that Legislators be equipped and prepared with the information and tools they may need to assist their constituents in understanding the changes taking place in Maine.

Action Plan: -- Building upon the efforts of the Itemized Billing Plan, Maine Legislators will continue to be an important audience to keep informed, and one from which to receive feedback. Send direct mail pieces reminding them of the toll-free number and the web site, encouraging them to include information on and about the campaign to their constituents. Host two legislator presentations, January 2000 and April. These meetings will be co-hosted by the PUC and the Utilities & Energy Committee of the Maine Legislature. Distribute information packets will include the following

Costs:

Legislators—\$6,250

Includes development, editing and mailing of information to approximately 200 legislators and 100 of their staff, two luncheons and NL coordination. Audio / visual rental fees are not included. Each event would cost \$750, which would come out of program extension funds.

Municipal Overview -- Municipal officials, both elected and appointed, represent an important audience because they will likely have questions from local citizens. Municipal officials will be called upon to help local residents understand the issues of electric industry restructuring to help them determine their "choice." In addition, they will want to know about electric choice because it may impact the municipalities' budgets.

Action Plan: The following specific activities will help us reach our communication goals for municipalities:

- Initiate outreach meetings with Maine Municipal Association to determine needs/opportunities
- Identify municipal contacts in database
- Develop presentation for association meetings
- Provide MMA with electric choice information for it's publication, "Maine Townsman"
- Provide 24 MMA affiliate groups with information about electric choice for their newsletters
- Identify and implement speakers bureau opportunities
- Attend MMA's series of four meetings in early Fall 1999
- Develop and utilize appropriate collateral
- Utilize trade booth at association meeting

Costs:

Municipalities—\$7,400

Includes development, mailing, and newsletter insertion fees, and NL coordination.

Regional Outreach Team

The core team of the Community-Based Outreach Program will be three Regional Outreach Coordinators. The Regional Outreach Coordinator role is that of a local coordinator responsible for serving as the person who can access other groups and thus facilitate strong two-way education and communications between the PUC and each region. Each coordinator will have a defined geographic territory as follows:

Region 1 -- Cumberland, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Waldo, and York counties

Region 2 -- Androscoggin, Franklin, Kennebec, Oxford, Piscataquis, and Somerset counties

Region 3 -- Aroostook, Hancock, Penobscot and Washington counties

While these regions have been selected to focus outreach and make management efforts more efficient, outreach will be conducted on a statewide, regional, or local basis depending upon the targeted audience and the method of delivery.

In addition, the coordinators will coordinate activities with such organizations as the Maine Chamber and Business Alliance, Maine Association of Chamber Executives, Maine Restaurant Association, Maine Innkeepers Association, the US-SBA office in Maine, NFIB and others that initiate their own statewide educational activities.

Regional Outreach Coordinator Duties

Each Regional Outreach Coordinator will act as a local representative for the education program. The coordinator will access other local groups and thus facilitate strong two-way communications between the PUC and each region. These individuals will have the following responsibilities:

- Work with selected CBOs to execute targeted outreach programs utilizing the Community Outreach Assistance Fund (COAF)

- Support all local organizations that are providing electric choice education, especially those that are implementing COAF activities
- Coordinate three Regional Roundtables in October 1999, January 2000 and April 2000 and possibly a fourth in the summer of 2000
- Coordinate Commissioner meetings in each of the three outreach regions during the last half of January 2000. Meetings will potentially be held in Portland, Rockland, Rumford, Bangor, Houlton, Farmington or Rumford and Augusta
- Provide information to the CBOs in their regions
- Obtain speaking engagements in their regions for the PUC
- Serve as referral agents to the other available resources (toll-free number, web site, video and brochures)
- Provide updates to the database
- Organize “train the trainer” workshops in their regions so that case workers, teachers, counselors and chamber execs or program directors may be able to counsel their constituents on electric choice and electric industry restructuring

Costs:

Regional Coordinators—\$94,500

Includes salary, telephone, postage, mileage, miscellaneous expenses incurred by the coordinators during a 12- month period and NL coordination.

Speakers Bureau

A targeted public speaking and public forum strategy is an essential and important way to deliver critical information to Maine residents. Speaking engagements hosted by consumer, business, environmental, municipal, civic groups and other interested groups and organizations in Maine will be scheduled for the PUC. These speaking engagements will serve to integrate the paid and unpaid media strategies that will be occurring simultaneously. The speakers bureau will be publicized through the media, the web site, direct mail and the Regional Outreach Coordinators. The speaking engagements will occur throughout the entire campaign and will be structured to increase awareness as well as deliver information. These speaking engagements will also give the PUC the opportunity to hear issues, concerns and questions and respond to them immediately while continually reinforcing the key consumer education campaign messages.

Four presentations will be prepared and used throughout the campaign. These topics include:

- Introduction to Restructuring/Itemized Billing -- December 1998 to March 1999
- Get Plugged In-What You Need to Know -- April 1999 to December 1999
- Choice Month Is Coming-Here’s Help -- January 1999 to February 28, 1999
- Choice Is Here-What You Need to Know -- March 2000 to January 2001

The second, third and fourth presentations will be developed into a PowerPoint and overhead projection format. Throughout the campaign, content will need to be modified as issues arise that need to be addressed. Included in each presentation will be referrals to the toll-free number, web site and where to go for further information. A master calendar of speaking engagements will be maintained and coordinated by the CEP team.

Costs:

Speakers Bureau—\$17,405

Includes design, layout, copywriting, production, printing, and duplication of three overhead and three PowerPoint presentations, and NL coordination.

Community Leader Outreach Meetings

During the last half of January 2000 the CEP team, with the help of the three Regional Outreach Coordinators, will host a series of statewide community leader outreach meetings. Similar to the outreach meetings in January 1999, the commissioners will give a “State of Electric Choice” presentation. The meeting will be structured so the Commissioners may give a short presentation, show the updated video and have time to answer questions from the audience. The PUC may also invite registered suppliers to make short presentations or engage in panel discussions during these meetings.

Updated materials will be handed out to those that attend. These will include a fact sheet, a “frequently asked questions” sheet, updated collateral materials and a form indicating where to go for more information.

The meetings may be held in the following locations:

- Portland
- Rockland
- Farmington or Rumford
- Bangor
- Houlton

- Augusta

Invitations will go out in mid-December and again the first week of January 2000 and will be targeted to Segment 1 and 2 CBOs and those groups in the database identified as being able to assist the CEP team with educational and outreach activities during the remainder of the campaign.

Costs:

Community Leader Outreach Meetings—\$22,000

Includes development, production, printing and mailing of postcard invitation, audio/visual rental fees, room rental fees, coffee service, development, printing and assembly of information packets and NL coordination and attendance.

Use of Campaign Collateral Materials

CBOs will be encouraged to use the collateral materials developed as part of the Consumer Education Program to assist their constituents with understanding the issues and preparing them to make choices. The materials will be distributed through the speakers bureau, through CBOs, at public forums and through requests from the toll-free number or web site. Materials may be adapted for visually or hearing-impaired consumers, functionally illiterate or those who do not use English as their primary language or for elderly consumers through the COAF program.

CBO Newsletter

A series of newsletters will be used to communicate with the groups in the database. Topics for these mailers may include:

- Basics of Choice
- Aggregation
- What your Regional Outreach Coordinators Can Do For You
- How to get Involved in the Consumer Education Campaign
- How to Shop for Electricity
- Energy Sources and options

CBOs will be encouraged to reproduce articles in the newsletter and insert them into their newsletters.

Costs:

CBO Newsletter—\$20,000

Includes design, copywriting, layout, printing, production, mailing and follow-up for newsletters and NL coordination.

Community Outreach Assistance Funds (COAF)

To encourage effective communication to hard-to-reach consumers, the PUC has earmarked up to \$100,000 in a Community Outreach Assistance Fund. The CEP team will identify CBOs that can be particularly effective in targeting the education program's hard-to-reach consumers and that are interested in educating their constituencies about electric choice. Criteria for receiving COAF funds will include the organization's ability to reach their audience most efficiently and in the greatest numbers. The CEP team will work with these CBOs to develop specific action plans. The plans will then be executed using COAF monies through the CBOs or through other appropriate subcontractors as determined by the CEP team. Primary target audiences for which these funds are to be used:

- Low-income consumers
- Senior citizens
- Visually impaired and hearing-impaired consumers
- Illiterate or functionally illiterate consumers
- Non-English speaking or English as a second language consumers

Some sample programs for consideration include (but are not limited to):

- Targeted, large-print handouts
- Targeted presentations for functionally illiterate consumers
- Audio tapes for the visually impaired
- Translated materials for consumers whose primary language is not English

The COAF program will be introduced in Summer 1999, and action plans will begin to be executed by Autumn 1999. The CEP team will execute the following when developing COAF opportunities:

- Mail application letter to all groups serving target audiences
- Request that letters of interest be returned to the PUC
- Review letters and award funds on the best timing for implementations of proposed COAF projects. Expedited awards may be necessary for some projects.

Costs:

COAF Funds—\$100,000

Funds will be allocated to develop initiatives for hard-to-reach consumers.

COAF Coordination—\$5,900

Includes NL coordination of projects with COAF recipients.

Regional Roundtables

The Regional Roundtables will serve as feedback panels to give the PUC regular qualitative input during the Consumer Education Program.

These roundtables will contain a core group of 10 - 20 individuals in each of three regions and will represent a variety of interests. It is expected that the roundtables will meet three times for about two hours each between fall of 1999 and spring of 2000.

All roundtable meetings will be open to the public and promoted as forums to air views, get information and provide feedback on the PUC's education campaign. Roundtable input will also be helpful in determining if there is confusion among consumers regarding marketing materials from competitive electricity suppliers.

Recruitment of Roundtables -- Recruitment of the Regional Roundtables will be a two-step process. Those attending the January 1999 regional presentations were asked to self-select by completing a form and returning it to NL Partners. In April 1999 this same information was sent to everyone who did not attend. The regional Outreach Coordinators will be directly involved in recruiting individuals to serve on the roundtable in their designated area. Roundtable meetings will be announced to the public through the media though they will not be presented as media forums.

Costs:

Regional Roundtables—\$26,050

Includes development of announcement, mailing and mail house costs, follow-up phone calls, meeting facility costs and NL coordination. Audio / visual rental fees are not included. Each event would be \$750 and would come out of the contingency fund.

Power of Partnerships

One of the best ways to extend and leverage the CBO outreach effort is to tie in with the communication efforts of other groups such as Maine's utility partners, licensed electricity suppliers and other state agencies that may have an interest in helping the CEP extend its reach. Additionally, engaging such groups will help ensure that a focused and coordinated message is communicated.

The CEP team will work with the various "partners" to ensure that all interested parties are coordinating their educational and marketing efforts, using consistent terminology, using materials referring consumers to the PUC's public education effort, the web site and the toll-free number and are encouraged and assisted in including electric choice information in bill inserts.

Staffing

The CEP team will be responsible for managing all outreach activities. This will include the hiring, training and management of three Regional Outreach Coordinators and the development and implementation of all action plans. All planning and implementation will be done in conjunction with the PUC staff and with input from the Consumer Education Advisory Panel. To assure the smooth operation and success of this outreach effort, the CEP team will develop an internal tracking of requests for speakers and materials that will include:

- Protocol for taking information from CBOs
- Tracking of calls and requests for outreach assistance, speakers or information
- Execution of Community Outreach Assistance Fund (COAF) projects
- Management of materials inventory and prioritization of distribution of materials both at the PUC and NL Partners

Community Outreach Activity Timeline

January 1999

Regional breakfasts held (Augusta, Bangor, Houlton & Portland)

Meeting with Maine Chamber, SBA-ME, NFIB to discuss their plans and how the PUC can interface

Meeting with MMA to create plan for outreach to municipalities and identification of logical speaking opportunities

March 1999

Speakers bureau presentation #2 developed, "Get Plugged In - What You Need to Know about Electric Choice"

Meetings with selected Segment 1 CBOs to prepare targeted outreach

Follow-up calls to CBOs that requested speakers (from January breakfasts)

Database refinements

April 1999

Ongoing recruitment for Regional Roundtables

Follow-up mailing to January 1999 breakfast meeting non-attendees

May 1999

COAF partners identified and mailed letter of application
Ongoing recruitment for Regional Roundtables

July 1999

Regional Coordinator jobs posted in Maine Sunday Telegram and Bangor Daily (weekend edition)

August 1999

COAF projects identified and reviewed with Advisory Panel CBO sub-committee
Follow-up with invitees from top 250 employers who did not respond to post-breakfast mailing
Newsletter #1 sent to identified CBOs
Regional Coordinators hired
Regional Roundtable meeting #1 notice sent

September 1999

Newsletter #2 sent to identified CBOs
Small business plan in place, coordination with Maine Chamber, Maine Association of Chamber Executives (MACE) and others
COAF projects begin
Speaking engagements set
Regional Coordinators contact local PTAs to determine appropriate outreach efforts
Chambers contacted to include articles in newsletters

October 1999

COAF projects detailed and implementation planning begun
Newsletter #3 sent to identified CBOs
Speakers bureau presentation #3 developed
Regional Roundtable #1 meeting held and feedback reviewed
Community Outreach Coordinators organize three training sessions in each region

November 1999

Ongoing outreach and speaking opportunities
Statewide commissioners meetings scheduled and locations finalized
Newsletter #4 sent to identified CBOs

December 1999

Ongoing monitoring for COAF projects
Regional Roundtable meeting #2 invitations sent
Invitations mailed for community leader outreach meetings, December 15th

January 2000

Regional Roundtable meeting #2 held
Legislative meeting #1 held
Statewide commissioners meetings held

February 2000

Newsletter #5 sent to identified CBOs

March 2000

Regional Roundtable meeting #3 invitations sent
Ongoing monitoring of COAF projects
Flexible outreach activities based on how consumers are responding to choice
Interface with Media Relations effort on statewide event
Newsletter #6 sent to identified CBOs

April 2000

Regional Roundtable meeting #4 held
Final legislative meeting held
Various outreach activities based on reaction to choice

May 2000

Evaluation of outreach effort prepared by NL Partners
Ongoing outreach needs identified by NL Partners; recommendations made to PUC
Seasonal residents who may need information on electric choice identified with recommended action plan

June 2000

Based on April consumer survey and analysis, support of CBOs continued
Priority CBO outreach extensions with primary focus on hard-to-reach segments
Regional Outreach Coordinator duties end
Contingency outreach activities developed as appropriate

September 2000

Final quantitative survey analyzed to determine knowledge of “hard-to-reach” segments.
October 2000

Based on analysis of final research, supplemental outreach efforts might include continued presentations to professionals working with hard-to-reach target groups

Program Extension Funds

November 2000

Based on needs suggested from research, “train the trainer” sessions conducted for outreach with hard-to-reach consumers

December 2000

Based on research, special mailing developed for hard-to-reach consumers

January 2001

Wrap-up assessment conducted with all active CBOs and final report made, suggesting ways appropriate CBOs can continue their support of “hard-to-reach” groups

VII. Media Relations

The goals of the media relations effort are to generate interest, enhance depth of knowledge, and cultivate partnerships with the media regarding electric industry restructuring. This will, by extension, create stories and news items, which will help educate consumers.

Phase II Review

The PUC's Consumer Education Program, as planned, has used itemized billing as a springboard to launch the concept of electric choice in Maine. The news conference held in December 1998 to educate the media about itemized billing served as a strong and successful start to the media relations effort. The effort gained extensive television coverage on all four major networks and resulted in an Associated Press article that was picked up in most of Maine's major dailies. A follow-up news release on itemized billing was distributed to all the weekly newspapers in early January. At the news conference the PUC emphasized the importance of the media's role in the public education program. The cover letter in the media kits referred to the public education campaign as a joint effort to properly educate Maine people about electric choice.

Future efforts will continue to rely on this collaborative approach and emphasize the need for a partnership with the media in communicating all of the complex issues of electric industry restructuring to Maine consumers.

Messaging

In analyzing the media coverage resulting from the news conference, it is evident that the concept of savings resulting specifically from competition rather than restructuring needs more attention in future communications with the media. Some coverage may have given the impression that the public could expect significant savings from competition. The media must be well educated on this issue to avoid misleading the public and creating false expectations about the competitive market.

Ongoing message themes will integrate other communication tactics, including collateral, outreach, advertising and the web. The following outlines the themes:

December 1998 -- March 1999. Intro to Electric Restructuring/Itemized Billing

April 1999 - December 1999. Get Plugged In-What You Need to Know

January 2000 - February 28, 1999.Choice is Coming-Here's Help

March 2000 - January 2001. Choice Is Here - What You Need to Know

After choice is introduced, media relations will focus on how choice is going, how consumers are feeling and what further information is needed to educate the media, and in turn, consumers.

Tactics

The media relations program will rely heavily on educating the media in small groups. While one-on-one appointments typical of a "media tour" around the state may be helpful in some cases, group sessions are less time consuming and more cost effective.

Whenever the PUC is travelling throughout the state, the CEP team will look for accompanying opportunities (interviews, roundtable discussions, and education sessions) to further promote direct contact with the media. This will be helpful in an ongoing effort to address misconceptions and clarify complex issues.

While the initial effort during Phase II focused on itemized billing, the media relations portion of the Comprehensive Plan will begin to address the more detailed aspects of electric industry restructuring and electric choice in phases, coordinating with the advertising messages and community outreach effort. Consumer resources such as the toll-free line and web site need to be promoted in all press releases.

Flexible Approach

It is critically important to maintain flexibility in our media relations plan. Topics and schedules must be able to be revised at any time based on current developments and campaign performance. Learning from our benchmark studies, competitive supplier messaging, feedback from roundtables and media misinterpretation may all play a role in refining the media relations strategy.

Coordination of Efforts

During the next 12-18 months, there is the potential for a great deal of messaging in the marketplace. The CEP team will continue to work with the utility and supplier partners to coordinate timing and content of major releases regarding electric industry restructuring and electric choice. In this way we will maximize impact, align overall messages and minimize expenditures of resources.

Media Relations Action Plan

The following action items represent the general proposed topics and timeline for communication with the media throughout the Consumer Education Program. The order and timing of these actions may be modified during implementation. Additional action items may be added as necessary.

January 1999 - March 1999—"Intro to Electric Restructuring/Itemized Billing"

January 1999

Action -- Invitations sent to media to attend Community Leader Outreach Meetings. Invitations contain enclosure announcing Q&A opportunity for media to meet with Commissioners after each event.

Outcome - - Further enhance understanding and provide one-on-ones with Commissioners. Desired attendance: at least two or three editors/reporters at each location. Media kits available.

Action --Expand distribution of media kits to the media. Target groups include television news directors, editorial directors of daily newspapers and radio news directors. All PR releases and phone calls will include a reminder of availability of media kits.

Outcome -- Achieve further penetration and create deeper understanding within media of electric choice message components/itemized billing.

February 1999

Action - Expand video distribution. Develop appropriate cover letter that can be tailored for statewide distribution as follows:

- Editorial page directors at major dailies
- TV and radio news directors
- News editors at major weeklies
- Reminder of video on all news releases

Outcome -- Unify presentation to the end consumer by providing further education of media

March 1999

Action --Release regarding reaction to itemized billing. Talk to utilities and determine what the response has been. Remind consumers that things are changing.

Outcome - Keep electric industry restructuring concepts in front of the public through periodic media coverage.

Action - Release details of initial research findings. Release copies of research summary and report.

Outcome -- Research shows need for widespread education and media support.

Action - Release piece on aggregation. The small commercial groups are already beginning to hear aggregation messages from the marketplace. They need to be given an unbiased frame of reference and tools to make informed choices.

Outcome - More informed commercial consumers

April 1999 - December 1999—"Get Plugged In-What You Need to Know"

April 1999

Action -- Release status of current suppliers and marketers approved by the PUC

Outcome -- Begin to create awareness of the flavor of competition in the marketplace, by providing example of the companies that are interested in competing in Maine.

Action - Release status of various key rule-making/legislative activities:

Supplier Licensing / Consumer Protections

Uniform Bill Disclosure

Distribution Company / Electricity Supplier Interaction Rule

Renewables

Outcome -- Create awareness of the role of the PUC in continued oversight of a restructured market.

May 1999

Action - Plan panel discussion with Maine Association of Broadcasters (MAB). MAB provides a natural forum to disseminate information about the education campaign and electric choice.

Outcome - A more informed press corps and by extension, a more informed consumer

June 1999

Action - Release on the concept of Standard Offer. Release will cover how the process will work and timing issues.

Outcome -- Consumers will begin to understand how the competitive environment will work, what they can expect, when they will have information, and what parties may be involved.

Action - Release information on the CBO effort (e.g. Regional Outreach Coordinators).

Outcome -- Begin to create awareness of the grassroots aspects of the Consumer Education Program, and opportunities for community participation.

August 1999

Action -- Announce appointment of Regional Outreach Coordinators. Release business photos and resumes.

Outcome -- Create awareness within local communities of who may be calling, or who to contact, to initiate outreach efforts.

Action - Announce CBO projects for hard-to-reach audiences.

Outcome - Consumers will begin to understand the grassroots effort of the campaign and the initiatives that are taking place for hard-to-reach or special needs consumers (note: these may or may not be COAF-funded projects).

September 1999

Action -- Begin periodic mailings of events calendar. Events will include speaking engagements, community meetings and/or other activities arranged through the CBO effort. This schedule could be an enclosure with news releases, as appropriate.

Outcome -- Encourage broad level of participation by providing opportunities to engage in outreach efforts.

Action -- Hold panel discussion at Annual Meeting of Maine Press Association. Consider advance mailing and developing additional special presentations events.

Outcome -- Create awareness within media community of electric choice campaign going into high visibility phase and reinforce need for strong media partnership and participation.

Action - Prepare release detailing components of Consumer Education Program. Information should include key components about to begin, such as small-space advertising, potential marketing from competitors and outreach activities. Release should also include reminder of public information resources such as the PUC toll-free line, web site, available materials and community outreach support. Release will emphasize the PUC as a neutral, objective and reliable source of information for Maine consumers.

Outcome -- Create awareness among target audiences of educational options available to support electric choice readiness and support the PUC as an objective and reliable source.

Action - Prepare a series of short articles primarily geared for weekly newspapers and shopper's guides. These publications are generally well read in local communities, but does not have the staff to generate specialized articles on topics such as electric industry restructuring. Topics could address:

- What is Electric Restructuring all about? Get Plugged In!
- How to be a Smart (Electricity) Shopper
- How to Select Your Power Supplier/Compare Offers
- No Choice - Still a Choice (What is the Standard Offer)
- Consumer Rights and Protections
- What Is Aggregation?
- Green Power

Outcome -- Create a wide net of stories in local newspapers to reinforce the grassroots nature of the campaign. The objective is to drive responses to the information resources available through the central campaign effort and in local communities via the outreach team.

October 1999

Action -- Announce Regional Roundtable meetings. Release dates, locations, purpose

Outcome -- Encourage a broad level of public participation and reinforce desire of campaign to be close to the community.

Action -- Update release on marketers/electricity suppliers, highlighting any "green" options This should only be done if it is appropriate at the time.

Outcome -- Reinforce who the players in the electric choice environment may be.

Action -- Approach major dailies (e.g. Press Herald/Bangor Daily News) about inserting electric choice editorial supplements. The goal will be to have the supplements published in late January or February once the stories surrounding Y2K have subsided. Advertising departments can recruit suppliers to help finance costs through advertising. Initiating these supplements in the editorial departments, if possible, will result in better content. As a fallback, advertising supplements could be pursued (which would also contain some editorial content).

Outcome -- Provide tangible, balanced picture of electric choice concepts and resources available to consumers to prepare themselves.

November 1999

Action -- Release results of interim/benchmark phone research. Provide information on status of consumer awareness, need for additional effort and concepts that need reinforcement.

Outcome -- Create awareness of messaging needs, level of confusion, any successes in knowledge gains among the target audiences.

Action - Hold media information sessions on the theme of "Get Plugged In on Electric Choice." Locations are tentatively Bangor, Augusta, Lewiston and Portland

Outcome - Gain additional buy-in from media for gearing up to choice month.

Action - Release update on aggregating organizations. Release information on some of the biggest aggregators, review benefits and concerns, and PUC venues for consumers to get unbiased information.

Outcome - Support consumers who may be evaluating aggregating options.

December 1999

Action -- Release results of Standard Offer bid rate(s) and providers. The content will depend on who participates, what the rates are, and how many options are available.

Outcome -- Provide a clear picture of what the choice environment will be. Tangible information that consumers can evaluate will now be available.

January 2000-March 2000 —Choice Is Coming-Here's Help

January 2000

Action (early January) -- Release on the New Millennium bringing new choices., "Eight Weeks to Electric Choice Date! Here's Help!" Remind audience of resources available to provide information.

Outcome - Create a sense of excitement, something BIG is coming---but there's plenty of support for the community.

Action - Arrange blitz of media interviews. Contact radio/TV talk show hosts & public affairs directors to arrange interviews with Commissioners, PUC Directors and other informed sources.

Outcome --Reinforce buzz of excitement about Choice Month, while assuring consumers that there is somewhere to turn for help.

Action -- Release updated information on competitive companies. List should include licensed marketers, brokers, aggregators and electricity suppliers who will participate in Maine's competitive market. Highlight availability of renewable options

Outcome - Audiences will have up-to-the-minute information on the participants in electric choice.

Action -- Release dates of community leader outreach meetings. Objective will be to provide a forum for the media to attend and have the opportunity for one-on-one interviews following the presentation. There will also be an opportunity for suppliers to make presentations or participate in panel discussions.

Outcome -- Media will be kept informed of new developments and provided a forum in which to gain a deeper understanding of the issues. This will help reduce misinformation to the end consumer. The sessions will also reinforce the competitive nature of restructuring

February 2000

Action -- Conduct televised call-in show. Approach TV stations to conduct a call in show

Outcome -- Audience will have source for on-the-spot answers to concerns of the moment. They can call in questions from home and listen to other questions being called in on the TV.

Action - Proposed editorial/advertising tabloid supplements published. Objective is to have at least two major dailies (e.g., Press Herald/Bangor Daily News) publish the supplement, which would include paid advertising from suppliers and editorial material. The papers may find the costs will be recovered from supplier advertisements.

Outcome -- Audiences will have an additional, unbiased resource delivered to their home.

Action -- Arrange for electronic media interviews. Work with radio and TV talk shows to arrange interviews to build excitement for electric choice.

Outcome -- Consumers will begin to be familiar with electric choice concepts, and feel more comfortable about the choices they have to make.

Action -- Anticipate contingency issues and prepare other news release(s) as needed.

Outcome - The CEP team will be prepared with a flexible approach to address any late-breaking issues that arise; consumers will be provided with timely, relevant information.

Action (Sunday, February 28) -- Conduct statewide newsworthy event. Event will celebrate the power of choice and generate last minute excitement regarding the Choice Date.

Outcome - Audience will feel eve of choice anticipation.

March 2000

Action (March 1, 2000) - Conduct kick-off news event. Event may include Governor King and the Commissioners, similar to kick-off event in December 1998.

Outcome - Create statewide awareness of the start of electric choice. This event will dovetail with paid advertising carrying a consistent and powerful message.

April 2000-September 2000 -- Choice is Here-Here's What You Need to Know

April 2000

Action -- Issue news release on the state of switching; why people are, or aren't, switching to new suppliers.

Outcome -- Consumers will be informed about status of electric choice.

May 2000

Action -- Release on green suppliers, and public attitudes toward these energy suppliers

Outcome -- Consumers will be reminded of choices available and how some consumers are making decisions.

Action -- Assess news value of benchmark quantitative survey; what awareness exists, what knowledge has been gained, what remains to be communicated. Issue release on pertinent data if appropriate.

Outcome -- Consumers will be informed as to impact of education campaign and issues needing additional focus.

June 2000

Action - Prepare a review of competition in Maine. Arrange follow-up interview focusing on state of competition. Release will give status report, show if and how competition is working, and work to arrange print stories, radio, TV talk show interviews, and one-on-one press briefings

Outcome - Public will have chance to reflect on how competition has changed their lives.

July 2000

Action -- Release on how seasonal summer residents are responding to electric choice

Outcome - Provide a different point of view from residents that do not live in the state year-round.

October 2000

Action - Release final benchmark survey findings regarding current levels of awareness and knowledge of electric choice and electric industry restructuring. Report on "state of competition"-- who has switched, options available and how people are responding to options

Outcome - Communicate current state of awareness of choice, suggest need for further actions.

Program Extension Funds

November 2000

Action - Release information on any new suppliers in Maine and how suppliers are feeling about the success of competition.

Outcome - Consumers will see effects of competition in Maine.

December 2000

Action - Release report on how distribution companies are faring, experiences they are having and the effects of the new competitive market.

Outcome - Consumers will develop a deeper understanding of the effects of competition.

January 2001

Action - Release "wrap-up" on all electric campaign information including how many people have switched, rates and anecdotal information on consumer's experiences.

Outcome - Consumers will have a complete picture of the “state of competition”.

Costs:

Media Relations (January 1999 - October 2000) \$62,650

Includes production execution and follow-up of releases between January 1999 and October 2000, PR contractor fees and NL coordination.

Media Evaluation

The CEP team, throughout the consumer education campaign, will provide an ongoing assessment of messaging in the market during the campaign. The media analysis is an important component as the campaign moves forward to fully understand messaging in the market and the ability to address any information that is inaccurate. The media evaluation will also be a tool to help the CEP team prepare two legislative reports. The media analysis will be a central component to analyze the factors that may be influencing the successful communication of the CEP and the environment in which information is being reported. The media analysis includes:

Three to Four Waves of TV Monitoring

The CEP team anticipates requesting broadcast monitoring to correspond with major campaign “milestones.”

Fall 1999 - One request during this time period (September - November) when the campaign begins to become active. This will be the first critical time in which to review messaging by the press to ensure factual accuracy.

December 1999 - One request following the announcement by the PUC of the Standard Offer Suppliers.

February 2000 - One request following the planned media event to officially welcome in choice.

Spring 2000 - One request during this time period (March - April) once choice is in the market.

Clipping of Statewide Dailies and Weeklies

Clipping will include any articles written regarding restructuring in Maine.

Costs:

Media Evaluation—\$13,000

Includes cost of broadcast and print clipping service and evaluation.

VIII. Collateral Materials

The goal of the collateral materials is to provide Maine consumers with the information to make informed decisions in a restructured environment.

Brochures

Research conducted at the outset of the program indicates the importance of collateral material to our target audiences. All audiences reported a fairly high level of desire to receive printed materials with information on electric choice from an unbiased source.

Permanent printed materials have the following advantages for the PUC electric choice program, because they provide a:

Method to control the message to avoid confusing or misleading interpretations
Format to which consumers can refer when and where they want
Significant amount of information such as terms, definitions and new concepts

Adaptation for Special Needs Consumers

As mentioned in the Outreach Plan, we will work with CBOs selected to receive COAF funds to adapt materials and messages for consumers with hearing or visual impairments and consumers who are functionally illiterate or use English as a second language. Materials will be written to the eighth grade reading level that is the national standard and level at which utilities currently develop materials.

Community Based Organization Component

Printed materials will be a crucial component to the success of the extensive Community Based Organization outreach effort. Communication pieces will be developed to support a variety of messaging needs as outlined below. All materials will consistently point to other sources for more information such as the toll-free line, the web site and the fulfillment center at the PUC.

Development of Materials

The CEP team will seek input from members of the Advisory Panel to assure expertise or special experience is incorporated into materials. A five-month timeframe is needed to develop and produce materials allowing ample time for members of the PUC and Advisory Panel to comment. Development and release of certain collateral may be affected by the timing of rule makings and legislation.

Brochure Size

Folded: 9"x 4". This size will allow the piece to stand alone, be stuffed in a standard #10 business envelope, or be mailed without an envelope.

Unified Collateral Theme

The collateral will be graphically tied, incorporating the Power/Choice logo and look, to ensure consistency of approach and clearly identify its connection with the PUC. All brochures will include information about where consumers can go to learn more, including the PUC address, web site, and toll-free number.

Purpose / Distribution

Collateral pieces are among the best tools to educate consumers. Consumers can use them when and where they want. Brochures will be distributed through a variety of venues such as:

- CBO Meetings
- Regional Roundtables
- Legislators
- Press
- PUC Office / Information Clearinghouse
- Speakers Bureau
- Advisory Panel
- Chambers of Commerce
- Trade Shows
- Requests following meetings and presentations

Based on these distribution venues, 50,000 of each brochure will be produced.

Utility Partners

One of the best ways to extend the value of collateral materials is to partner with Maine's utilities to distribute collateral materials developed as part of the Consumer Education Program. Partnering with the utilities to distribute materials will help ensure a focused and coordinated message and minimize expenditures of resources for both the Consumer Education Program and any communications the utilities may be planning.

The CEP team will approach the utilities to distribute the following brochures:

- Power Guide
- Groups Power

- **Power Sources**

As with the itemized billing brochure, the utilities will be encouraged to distribute future collateral pieces developed as part of the Consumer Education Program to their residential consumers. Utilities will only have to pay for the number of brochures needed, and the per piece cost will be based on the volume discount achieved through the PUC's order. In addition, the CEP team will partner with utilities to investigate opportunities to reinforce the CEP message through the utilities' planned bill stuffers.

Proposed Brochure Topics

Detailed below is a summary of all materials to be prepared by the Consumer Education Program, including a brief discussion of content and uses.

Power Guide

This brochure will act as a comprehensive guide for consumers who may be looking for information about electric industry restructuring and electric choice.

Contents will include a "shopping guide" for consumers and will give them an array of questions they may want to ask potential suppliers. "What You Need to Know" will detail the consumer protection in place by explaining concepts like uniform bill disclosure, slamming protections and how consumers can get on a Do Not Call List. Additionally it will provide details about the Standard Offer, how it works, and how it differs from competitive electricity suppliers. A glossary of terms will be included to ensure that consumers become familiar with the terms and terminology associated with Electric Choice.

Power Sources

Many consumers may wish to consider "environmentally friendly" power as an option. This brochure will explain those issues. "Power Sources" will discuss the benefits and trade-off of making environmentally "clean" choices. It will also cover what sources are considered renewable and non-renewable, the minimum renewable mix required of all suppliers by law and energy efficiency tips all consumers can take advantage of. A glossary of terms will be developed to familiarize consumers with the "terms and terminology" of energy sources.

Group Power

"Group Power" will explain the fundamental of aggregation and may include a list of possible aggregators (towns, civic groups, professional associations, trade associations and environmental associations), questions to ask an aggregator and the benefits and trade-off of joining an aggregate. A glossary of terms will be developed to familiarize consumers with the terms and terminology of aggregation.

Brochure Holder

To provide a jacket to contain multiple brochures, a die-cut folder will be developed that will be capable of holding up to six brochures and other fact sheets that may be developed throughout the campaign. These folders will be useful for distributing information to CBOs, consumers, press, community leaders, Regional Roundtable members, and other groups.

Costs:

Collateral Materials—\$76,000

Includes design, layout, copywriting, production, printing of 50,000 of each brochure and brochure holder and NL coordination

Distribution—\$10,500

Includes identifying groups, development and editing of letter to groups, mailing and follow-up costs and NL coordination

Video Revision

The CEP team plans to revise the electric choice video for use in the fall. This will contain additions and new information that is pertinent to the campaign at that time. Revisions to the video may include:

- A detailed explanation of Standard Offer Service
- An editing down of itemized billing to make room for other information
- Questions to ask any potential electricity suppliers
- A description of outreach efforts, and support consumers might seek from CBOs
- Updated language throughout the video to make it current
- A detailed description of how the choice process will work
- Consumer protections including the uniform disclosure label and how to use it and the Do Not Call List
- Close-caption version that can be duplicated for groups that work with hearing-impaired consumers

The video will be distributed through a wide variety of venues including:

- CBO Meetings/Groups
- Regional Roundtables
- College Libraries
- High School Libraries
- Town Libraries
- Legislators
- Press
- PUC Office/Information Clearinghouse
- Speakers Bureau
- Town Halls
- Advisory Panel
- Utility Partners
- Electricity Suppliers
- Chambers of Commerce
- Public Access TV Stations
- Trade Shows (Five “looped” versions)

Costs:

Video Revision—\$38,000

Includes revisions to script, filming additional footage (2 days), editing, production, printing and duplication of 4,000 videos and NL coordination.

Video Distribution #2—\$6,000

Includes identifying groups, development and editing of letter to groups, mailing and follow-up costs and NL coordination.

Audio Cassette

An audio cassette will be developed primarily to get information to legislators who may be too busy to watch the video or spend time with any written materials but who are more likely to have time to listen while driving. Additionally, the audiocassettes can be used to accommodate and get information to some “special needs” consumers, such as the visually impaired.

The audio for the cassette will be “lifted” from the video revision that is planned. To ensure the cassette has a natural flow, recording an introduction or a close may be necessary.

Costs:

Audio Cassettes—\$3,000

Includes production costs, duping and distribution and NL coordination

Web Site

During Phase II of the Consumer Education Program, an educational web site was developed. The web site offers consumers a basic description of what electric industry restructuring is all about, the changes that are happening, the timing of these changes, an interactive itemized bill, a practical guide of how to shop for electricity, frequently asked questions and answers and a glossary of terms. The site also provides consumers the opportunity to request materials, ask questions of the PUC and request speakers.

The internet has become in recent years, an increasingly popular way to get information. To support the PUC as a reliable and credible source of information throughout the campaign the following enhancements will be made to the web site:

- Downloadable versions of all collateral material produced
- Links to electricity suppliers and distribution companies
- Enhanced description of the Standard Offer Service

Costs:

Web Site— \$9,000

Includes monthly host fees, posting of collateral materials, Standard Offer description, links and NL coordination

Trade Show Display

The CEP team will develop a six-foot “tabletop” trade booth display that will be used throughout the campaign in a variety of venues that may include:

- Bangor and Portland Home Shows
- Annual FAME Dinner
- Professional Trade Shows
- Mall Events
- Statewide Fairs and Festivals

Additionally, the trade booth will host current brochures and fact sheets and will feature a “looped” version of the educational video.

The Regional Coordinators will be responsible for making any arrangements for the trade shows. PUC representatives will staff all trade shows.

Costs:

Trade Show Display—\$3,000

Includes design and production of display and coordination of events. Cost does not include fees for NL personnel to staff events. Cost does not include TV/VCR rental fees.

Trade Show Fees—\$7,500

Cost based on 15 trade shows at approximately \$500 for each show.

IX. Residential Direct Mail

Both our qualitative and quantitative research indicated that consumers have a strong preference for receiving information at their homes via mailings. In this way, consumers can access the information “when and where they want.” The targeted direct mail program is planned to meet this consumer need.

The Electric Choice Primer

The objective in using direct mail to reach residential consumers is as follows:

- To provide all target audiences with the information they will need in order to make informed choices
- To provide this information in a comprehensive, storable format for future reference

The direct mail primer will be a comprehensive resource that will address the changes occurring with electric choice and essential information for all audiences. The information included in this piece will be:

- An introduction to electric choice in Maine/what’s changing
- Standard Offer and what it means to the consumer
- Itemized billing
- Glossary of terms
- Low-income programs
- Consumer protections
- How to choose/comparative shopping guide
- Overview of aggregation
- Energy sources and options
- Frequently asked questions
- How to get more information—web site, toll-free number and other sources

Statewide Residential Consumer Mailing

The Consumer Education Program will mail the Electric Choice Primer to all residential consumer households in Maine (600,000 households plus 50,000 overrun for handouts). This piece will be mailed in early January 2000. Additional reprints will be available for distribution through the outreach program and to fulfill requests via the PUC Call Center.

Costs:

Primer—\$150,000

Includes design, layout, copywriting, production, printing and mailing to all residential households in Maine and NL coordination.

X. Advertising Plan

The advertising plan will have the greatest reach of all of the Consumer Education Program components. It will deliver the base level of awareness regarding electric choice for Maine consumers.

Overview

Budget -- As noted in the discussion section of the Order of Approval to the Initial Workplan (Docket No. 98-565, 8/28/98), the funding for the advertising component is modest. The goal is to avoid developing a plan that attempts to address too many needs, and by doing so, fails to adequately address any.

Timing -- There is agreement among the CEP team that competitive electricity suppliers may begin advertising between October 1999 and December 1999, once the Standard Offer rates have been decided. This would suggest that advertising should begin as early as fall of 1999. However, it will be difficult to support a full advertising launch that would begin in fall 1999 and run through late spring 2000. The recommended plan addresses both issues without compromising the plan's integrity.

Advertising Objectives

The goal of the advertising is twofold:

To raise awareness among Maine residents about electric choice

To encourage consumers to seek additional (more detailed) information about the many nuances of electric choice from PUC designated sources

Because the residential consumer survey has clearly illustrated that 53% of Mainers are not even aware that changes will be happening, we need to make sure that Mainers are aware that electric industry restructuring is going to take place. Additionally, because the survey has clearly illustrated that the level of misconception and incorrect information is very high among residential consumers, we need to make sure that Mainers are very aware about where they can go to obtain information.

Advertising Strategy

The advertising plan will utilize the most efficient advertising vehicles in order to obtain the maximum number of impressions among the target audience. The recommended plan will use TV, radio, and newspaper.

Rationale -- Maine consumers are going to become interested about restructuring at different times. Consequently, the number of Mainers interested in restructuring may range from 5% to 20% of the population at any given moment.

The strategy is to make sure that consumers are constantly reminded with information on where to get additional details on electric restructuring. In this way, they can get the information they need when they are ready to learn about it.

Target Audience

Adults 18+. All potential decision makers regarding electricity purchases.

Media Plan

The following provides an overview of the media plan. The plan uses TV (all 8 stations), newspapers (the 7 major dailies and 47 weeklies) and radio (17 stations that reach the target most efficiently) in varying degrees.

Description - This plan addresses the two key timing concerns put forth in the advertising objectives. It includes TV and radio in the fall, plus a series of print ads in the seven major dailies and 47 local weeklies that simply and directly give consumers the three key places to obtain information about electric choice. The bulk of the plan is deployed just prior to and during Choice Month. The balance runs from October 1999 through April 2000.

Benefits - This plan gives the consumer the ability to get answers at two critical points in the campaign: 1) when most competitive electricity suppliers may begin marketing to their consumers; and 2) prior to and following choice month.

Costs:

Net Advertising—\$341,627

Includes direct costs of buying advertising.

Media Commission (13.5%)—\$ 53,317

Includes planning, negotiating, placement, and follow-up of all media placed.

TV Production (3 -:30, 3 - :10 spots)—\$ 74,000

Cost includes all copywriting, storyboards, scripting, studio production, filming and duplication costs and NL coordination.

Radio Production (3 - :60 spots)—\$ 19,500

Cost includes all copywriting, scripting, studio production, filming and duplication costs and NL coordination.

Print Production (4 ads)—\$ 15,500

Cost includes all copywriting, layout, production, printing and duplication costs and NL coordination.

Media Analysis of Reach and Frequency

The goal of an advertising plan is to place the message in front of the target consumers. However, the message may not register with most consumers the first time it is seen. Consumers need to see the message a certain number of times in order for it to make an “effective impression”. Greater frequency is important with the PUC effort as it attempts to move consumers through a progression from awareness to understanding to increased comfort to informed decision-making.

Overview

Consumers are bombarded by hundreds of advertising messages. These messages reach them through a variety of advertising vehicles (e.g., TV, radio, print, the internet and direct mail). The science of interpreting and analyzing where, how often, and for what price an advertising message should be placed is one of the fundamentals of media and can be best explained by a reach and frequency Analysis. The following details the basic elements that are used in developing a reach and frequency analysis and by extension, a media plan.

Target Audience

Those members of the general population most likely to purchase the product or service

Typical Target Factors

Age:	12-17, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 18+, 25+, 65+
Sex:	Female, male, or both (adults)
Income:	Typically household dollars - \$25K+, \$40K+, \$75K+
Education:	High school grad, some college, college grad
Geography:	Maine, New England
Usage:	Current user, occasional user, past user
Purchase cycle:	Weekly, monthly, annually, bi-annually

Advertising Measurement

Supplements hard statistical tracking data
Determines cost efficiencies for selecting the best media vehicles
Evaluates the best media plan

Advertising is measured using units called a GRP (Gross Rating Point) which is a unit of measure equivalent to 1% of the Target Audience.

Reach is the percent of total target audience that sees your ad during a given advertising plan or schedule. Reach is expressed in whole numbers (e.g., 72, 55, 39, or 87).

Frequency is the average number of times the people who see the ad (reach) actually see it. Frequency is expressed in single digit fractions (e.g. 3.2, 5.6, 6.5, or 7.8).

R/F equation: Reach X Frequency = GRPs

What is effective frequency?

Effective frequency is the number of times an individual must be exposed to an advertising message for it to have any effect on subsequent behavior. Prior to the early ‘90s, several studies had shown that effective frequency was roughly 3.2 to 3.6 exposures, depending on the product category, product share of voice, and advertising medium used. (Increased exposure to television advertising will increase awareness, but this will not occur in print. -Millward Brown)

In the early ‘90s a new theory was espoused which suggested that the high use of remote controls (zapping) increased advertising clutter, and growing consumer indifference to advertising resulted in an increased number of exposures needed to achieve effective frequency. Jay Conrad Levinson (Guerilla Marketing) noted that if most consumers only notice one out of every three ads, it will take roughly nine advertising exposures to achieve effective frequency.

In his subsequent book Guerilla Marketing Handbook (1994), he revised this figure to one in nine, thus suggesting a need for 27 exposures. However, it is important to note that the original three-exposure (3.2-3.6) premise is based on viewer disinterest/distraction. We believe in this example he overstates his case by applying the theory of viewer disinterest/distraction twice.

An additional argument is made by Colin McDonald in his book Advertising Reach and Frequency . He argues that the timing of exposures within the purchase cycle is more critical than the number of exposures. McDonald cites research that two closely placed messages in a time just prior to a purchase occasion may be effective in increasing purchase probability. It should be noted that these exposures must be noticed (or proven) by the consumer.

In what time intervals must these exposures occur?

Advertising begins to be forgotten immediately after its exposure. Unless the target acts upon it, the ad will have little effect until they are exposed to it again or are otherwise reminded of the message. Consequently, this is why most advertising research examines a 4-week time period for measuring effective frequency.

NL Partners’ Guidelines

At NL Partners we have based our effective frequency model on a combination of Levinson’s and McDonald’s arguments. The following details our recommendations for average 4-week effective frequency in different marketing situations. It is based on exposures (which can be verified by a reach & frequency analysis), not on noticed (or proven) exposures.

Product	Category	Recommended EF
Established	Established	5.5 - 6.5
New	Established	9.5 - 10.5
New	New	contingent on purchase cycle

PUC Consumer Education Plan

There are several factors that will affect the effective frequency (EF) for this plan:
There should be a great deal of interest in and attention given to electric restructuring by the media. This is in many ways a new product launch. People have never had to choose among competing vendors for electricity supply. Consumers will not only have to learn about new generating company choices, they will also have to learn about what they can and cannot do.
There is no defined purchase cycle (consumers can elect to do nothing). Consumer interest will rise and wane in an unpredictable manner.

Consequently, we believe that during the key months prior to and following March 1, 2000, the effective frequency (average 4-week) should be a minimum of 10.5. This equates to a consumer seeing or hearing an ad once every 2.67 days.

Reach and Frequency Analysis

Demographic: State of Maine, 18+ Universe (1997 Census figures) 944,785

	Qtr #1 Nov -- Jan ‘00	Qtr #2 Feb - Apr --00
Average 4-Week		
Television R/F	66/3.5	93/8.8
Radio R/F	51/2.3	67/4.2
Combined R/F	78/4.4	96/11.4
W/Newspapers	84/5.2	97/12.8
Quarterly		
Television R/F	76/9.8	95/28.0
Radio R/F	71/5.3	81/11.2
Combined R/F	89/12.7	99/35.9
W/Newspapers		

Newspaper Caveat

Because newspaper readership (versus circulation) is not monitored by an independent monitoring agency and is not included in media reach and frequency programs, we have estimated the impact of the newspaper schedules in each plan.

To develop estimated newspaper impressions we used current circulation figures, projected readers per copy and projected readership estimates.

Recommended Television Stations

Bangor DMA (Nielsen)

WABI
WLBZ
WVII

Portland DMA (Nielsen)

WCSH
WGME
WMTW
WPXT

Presque Isle DMA (Nielsen)

WAGM

Recommended Radio Stations

Augusta Radio Market (Arbitron)
WMME/WEBB
WTOS
WABK

Bangor Radio Market (Arbitron)
WKIT
WKSQ
WWMJ/WEZQ
WQCB

Portland Radio Market (Arbitron)
WBLM
WCDQ
WCLZ
WHOM
WJBQ
WMGX
WMWX
WPOR
WRED
WTHT
WYNZ

Presque Isle Radio Market (Arbitron)
WQDY
WBPW/WQHR

Recommended Newspapers

Major Dailies
Bangor Daily News
Brunswick Times Record
Journal Tribune
Kennebec Journal
Lewiston Sun Journal
Portland Press Herald
Waterville Sentinel
Fosters Daily Democrat

Local Weeklies
Advertiser Democrat
American Journal
Aroostook Republican
Bar Harbor Times
Bethel Citizen
Biddeford/Saco/OOB Courier
Boothbay Register
Bridgton News
Calais Advertiser
Camden Herald
Cape Courier
Capital Weekly
Carney Brook Chronicle
Castine Patriot
Coastal Journal
Courier Gazette
Downeast Coastal Press
Eastern Gazette
Ellsworth American
Falmouth Forecaster
Fort Fairfield Review
Franklin Journal
Gorham Times
Houlton Pioneer Times
The Irregular
Katahdin Times
Lincoln County Weekly
Machias Valley News
Moosehead Messenger
The (Yarmouth) Notes
Penobscot Times
Piscataquis Observer

Presque Isle Star Herald
Rangeley Highlander
Republican Journal
Rolling Thunder Press
Rumford Valley Times
Sanford News
Scarborough Leader
Somerset Gazette
St. John Valley Times
Suburban News
Waldo Independent
The Weekly (Bangor)
York County Coast Star
The York Weekly

Campaign Themes

Pre-choice (Fall 1999 -- Recommended Plan) -- The goal is to generate awareness about where consumers can obtain information. The theme of the campaign is “Get Plugged In -What You Need to Know about Electric Choice.” A series of print and electronic (TV and radio) ads will be developed that simply and directly provide consumers with three basic sources of information about electric choice:

The web site

The toll-free phone number to call for information, brochures and fact sheets

The PUC address

Pre-choice (January/February 2000) -- Generate awareness about the upcoming changes/electric industry restructuring. The theme is “Choice Date Is Coming! Here’s Help.” A series of print and electronic ads are planned that covers a variety of issues the research has highlighted as being important to consumers (reliability, rapid restoration, and quality of electricity) and addresses common misconceptions about electric industry restructuring.

Post March 2000 - - Generate awareness about what has transpired. The theme is “Choice is Here!” A series of print and electronic ads will expand upon the issues developed in the “Choice Is Coming” series and address two more important elements: 1) the act of choosing; and 2) issues that we have not planned for, but have developed out of the newly competitive forum. There may be issues with electricity suppliers, or with the existing distribution companies, or with consumers. We need to be prepared to address them as they develop.

Media Selection

The following details the rationale for the recommended media vehicles:

Television

Television will be the primary media vehicle because it is the most efficient. It has the benefit of allowing the advertising message to use sight, sound and motion to fully captivate the target audience.

Radio

Radio will be used as the secondary medium to provide campaign synergy with the television advertising. Radio is generally listened to in one-on-one environments (car, at home) and consequently has the benefit of reaching a more receptive consumer.

Newspaper

Newspapers are perhaps the most trusted source for objective information. The only disadvantage is newspapers, by design, are very cluttered. Consequently, the advertising message needs to be quite large to be noticed.

Creative Units

Television

:30/:10 -- The recommended plan calls for three TV commercials. Each will execute one of the three campaign themes. In order to maximize awareness within the existing budget constraints, each :30 spot will have a :10 cut-down version. Additionally, the spots will be close-captioned to accommodate those consumers that are hearing-impaired.

Radio

:60 -- The recommended unit is the standard local radio length of :60. One ad will be developed for each of the three campaign themes.

Newspaper

Four print ads will be developed. A 3 column by 7-inch ad will be created for pre-choice. For the critical period of February/March 2000 a 3 column by 10.5-inch ad will be created in order to generate as much awareness of the issue as possible. This will be followed by another 3 column by 7-inch ad that addresses the post-choice theme. A 4 column by 2-inch ad will be developed as a “general awareness” ad.

PSA Component

As an additional component of this plan, the CEP team will be seeking bonus space and time from all of the media vendors. The rationale is that the education campaign's advertising is a Public Service Announcement (PSA). The campaign is not selling anything. Instead, it seeks to inform Maine consumers about electric restructuring, an event that will affect every single Maine citizen.

The CEP team will negotiate the following terms:

TV	For every two paid spots, the PUC gets one PSA
Radio	For every two paid spots, the PUC gets one PSA
Newspaper	Ads run at the not-for-profit rate

Timing

Creative development began in April 1999. The first round of advertising will be launched in September 1999.

XI. Monitoring and Program Changes

As discussed in the research section, the CEP team has planned a series of ongoing quantitative and qualitative research to measure the effectiveness of our communication efforts and refine our plan as needed. Details of the research plan can be found in the Research/Establishment of Benchmarks section.

Review of Regional Roundtable data

After each Regional Roundtable meeting (October 1999, January 2000, April 2000) a report will be generated with feedback from this group

This report will be reviewed with the PUC and the Advisory Panel to examine significant trends in perceptions, behavior, opinions and knowledge level within attendees

Following this discussion NL Partners will make a recommendation on any directions/trends that need further review or verification by quantitative means (i.e., incorporated into phone study) and relevance to our stated benchmarks

If overwhelming findings occur, program/materials/strategy changes could be made based on the qualitative data alone

Review of quantitative phone studies

Initial quantitative phone studies were conducted for all target audiences during Phase I. Benchmarks were established for all audiences. Due to budget parameters, follow-up quantitative phone studies will be conducted to measure progress toward benchmarks on only the residential consumer target audience. These studies will be conducted in October 1999, April 2000 and September 2000. A complete research report will be prepared which includes the following:

- Current levels of awareness
- Amount of real learning in the marketplace
- Progress toward benchmarks

NL Partners' review of campaign progress; recommendations for action; relevance to data gathered from clippings/marketing review and feedback from roundtables, immediate next steps for refinement of campaign

Legislative Reports

NL with the help of the PUC will prepare two Legislative reports, January 2000 and January 2001, that will describe the status of the Consumer Education Program including available research, media messaging, PR and Community-Based Outreach efforts, and media exposure.

Other feedback considered

To prepare its bi-monthly analysis, the CEP team will also consider input from the following sources for review:

Advisory Panel

Feedback from Call Center Activity

Feedback from web site visitors

PUC Commissioners

CBO partners

Utility partners

Competitive electricity suppliers

Media partners

Regional Outreach Coordinators

Outside consultants, i.e., Greg Franklin and Associates

Lynn Goldfarb, NL Team Utility Industry Advisor

The CEP team's ongoing monitoring and recommendations will be based on the above input and other sources as appropriate. All recommendations to refine the plan will be discussed with our PUC client team, the Advisory Panel, and if necessary, the PUC Commissioners, before changes are implemented.

Costs:

Monitoring and Program Changes—\$9,800

Includes review and analysis of Regional Roundtable discussions, final quantitative report and press coverage, development and duplication of any reports issued and NL coordination.

Media Plan Flow Chart

October - April			Oct. 1999					November				December				January 2000				February				March					April				TI GRPS	TI \$s		
Medium	Region	Unit	27	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10		24	31	7	14	21	28	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24			
TV	Portland/Bangor/PI	:30										75	75	75			75	75	100			100	100	150	150	150	150	150	100	100	100	100			1,825	\$142,350
	Portland/Bangor/PI	:10										75	75	75			75	75	100			100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100			1,575	\$61,425
Radio	Portland/Aug/Bang/PI	:60										75	75	75			75	75	75			75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75			1,275	\$75,225	
Newspapers	7 Major Dailies	2 col x 4"	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																			NA	\$15,868
		3 col x 7"															1	1		1		1				1	1		1					NA	\$20,827	
		3 col x 10.5"											1										1	1	1	1									NA	\$17,852
	47 Weeklies	2 col x 4"			1				1				1			1		1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1		1		1				NA	\$58,422
Total																													4,675	\$391,969						

Comprehensive Plan Budget Summary

Phase I		
Program Planning	\$10,000.00	
Interim Research/Development of Benchmarks	\$52,000.00	
Comprehensive Plan	\$50,000.00	\$112,000.00
Phase II		
Video	\$50,000.00	
Brochure	\$7,000.00	
Media Relations/PR Kits	\$12,000.00	
Web site	\$10,000.00	
Logo/Identity	\$5,500.00	
Community/Opinion Leader Outreach	\$10,000.00	\$94,500.00
Phase II - additional expenses		
Video Distribution	\$5,000.00	
Community Leader Meetings	\$21,000.00	\$26,000.00
Phase III		
Final Research/Phone Surveys	\$42,000.00	
Community Leader Meeting Follow-up	\$10,700.00	
Media Relations (5/99 - 10/00)	\$41,400.00	
Media Evaluation	\$13,000.00	
Community/Opinion Leader/Database Mgmnt	\$12,700.00	
Community Relations/Public Outreach (8/99 - 6/00)	\$154,700.00	
Community Leader Outreach Meetings	\$22,000.00	
Speakers Bureau	\$17,405.00	
COAF Coordination	\$5,900.00	
COAF	\$100,000.00	
Collateral Material	\$76,000.00	
Materials Focus Groups	\$9,000.00	
Cassettes	\$3,000.00	
Web site - Updates	\$9,000.00	
Video Revision	\$38,000.00	
Video Distribution #2	\$6,000.00	
Distribution of Collateral Material	\$10,500.00	
CBO Newsletters	\$20,000.00	
Primer	\$150,000.00	
Tradeshow Booth	\$3,000.00	
Tradeshow Fees	\$7,500.00	
Media costs and TV/Radio/Print Production	\$503,944.00	
Monitoring and Program Changes	\$9,800.00	\$1,265,549.00
Total		\$1,498,049.00

Line Item Detail

Phase III		
Media Evaluation		
Broadcast Clipping Service	\$4,963.00	
Newspaper Clipping Service	\$8,037.00	\$13,000.00

Community Relations/Public Outreach

Regional Coordinators	\$94,500.00
Regional Roundtables	\$26,050.00

Legislators	\$6,250.00	
Municipalities	\$7,400.00	
Small Businessess	\$20,500.00	
		\$154,700.00

Media Costs and Production

Advertisin g	\$341,627.00	
Media Commission 13.5%	\$53,317.00	
TV Production (3 - :30 3 - :10 spots)	\$74,000.00	
Radio Production (3 - :60 spots)	\$19,500.00	
Print Production (3 ads)	\$15,500.00	
		\$503,944.00